THE MANDALAY EDITION
OF THE WORKS OF
RUDYARD KIPLING

DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES: BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS AND OTHER VERSES

THE FIVE NATIONS
THE SEVEN SEAS

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

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DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES AND OTHER VERSES

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DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES
BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS
And Other Verses

AVE IMPERATRIX

(1882)

(Written on the occasion of the attempt to assassinate Queen Victoria in March, 1882)

FROM every quarter of your land
They give God thanks Who turned away
Death and the needy madman's hand,
Death-fraught, which menaced you that day.

One school of many made to make
Men who shall hold it dearest right
To battle for their ruler's sake
And stake their being in the fight,

Sends greeting humble and sincere
Though verse be rude and poor and mean,
To you, the greatest as most dear—
Victoria, by God's grace our Queen!

Such greeting as should come from those
Whose fathers faced the Sepoy hordes,
Or served you in the Russian snows
And, dying, left their sons their swords.

And some of us have fought for you
  Already in the Afghan pass,
Or where the scarce-seen smoke-puffs flew
  From Boer marksmen in the grass.

And all are bred to do your will
  By land and sea, wherever flies
The Flag, to fight and follow still
  And work your Empire's destinies.

Once more we greet you, though unseen
  Our greeting be and coming slow,
Trust us if need arise, O Queen,
  We shall not tarry with the blow.

DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES

(1885–1887)

PRELUDE

I HAVE eaten your bread and salt,
I have drunk your water and wine,
The deaths ye died I have watched beside,
And the lives that ye led were mine.

Was there aught that I did not share
In vigil or toil or ease,—
One joy or woe that I did not know,
Dear hearts across the seas?

I have written the tale of our life
For a sheltered people's mirth,
In jesting guise—but ye are wise,
And ye know what the jest is worth.

GENERAL SUMMARY

WE are very slightly changed
From the semi-apes who ranged
India's prehistoric clay.
He who drew the longest bow
Ran his brother down, you know,
As we run men down to-day.

'Dowb,' the first of all his race,
Met the Mammoth face to face
On the lake or in the cave,
Stole the steadiest canoe,
Ate the quarry others slew,
Died—and took the finest grave.

When they scratched the reindeer-bone,
Some one made the sketch his own,
Filched it from the artist—then,
Even in those early days,
Won a simple Viceroy's praise
Through the toil of other men.

Ere they hewed the Sphinx's visage
Favouritism governed kissage,
Even as it does in this age.
Who shall doubt 'the secret hid
Under Cheops' pyramid'
Was that the contractor did
Cheops out of several millions?

Or that Joseph's sudden rise
To Comptroller of Supplies
Was a fraud of monstrous size
  On King Pharaoh's swart Civilians?

Thus, the artless songs I sing
Do not deal with anything
  New or never said before.
As it was in the beginning
Is to-day official sinning,
  And shall be for evermore!

ARMY HEAD-QUARTERS

Old is the song that I sing
  Old as my unpaid bills—
Old as the chicken that kitmutgars bring
  Men at dak-bungalows—old as the Hills.

AHASUERUS JENKINS of the 'Operatic Own,'
  Was dowered with a tenor voice of super-Santley tone.
His views on equitation were, perhaps, a trifle queer;
He had no seat worth mentioning, but oh! he had an ear.

He clubbed his wretched company a dozen times a day,
He used to quit his charger in a parabolic way,
His method of saluting was the joy of all beholders,
But Ahasuerus Jenkins had a head upon his shoulders.

He took two months at Simla when the year was at the spring,
And underneath the deodars eternally did sing.
He warbled like a bul-bul, but particularly at
Cornelia Agrippina who was musical and fat.

She controlled a humble husband, who, in turn, controlled a Dept.
Where Cornelia Agrippina's human singing-birds were kept

From April to October on a plump retaining-fee,
Supplied, of course, per mensem by the Indian Treasury.

Cornelia used to sing with him, and Jenkins used to play;
He praised unblushingly her notes, for he was false as they;
So when the winds of April turned the budding roses brown,
Cornelia told her husband:—'Tom, you mustn't send him down.'

They haled him from his regiment which didn't much regret him;
They found for him an office-stool, and on that stool they set him.
To play with maps and catalogues three idle hours a day,
And draw his plump retaining-fee—which means his double pay.

Now, ever after dinner, when the coffee-cups are brought,
Ahasuerus waileth o'er the grand pianoforte;
And, thanks to fair Cornelia, his fame hath waxen great,
And Ahasuerus Jenkins is a power in the State.

STUDY OF AN ELEVATION, IN INDIAN INK

This ditty is a string of lies.
But—how the deuce did Gubbins rise?

POTIPHAR GUBBINS, C. E.,
Stands at the top of the tree;
And I muse in my bed on the reasons that led
To the hoisting of Potiphar G.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,
Is seven years junior to Me;
Each bridge that he makes either buckles or breaks,
And his work is as rough as he.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,
Is coarse as a chimpanzee;
And I can't understand why you gave him your hand,
Lovely Mehitabel Lee.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,
Is dear to the Powers that Be;
For They bow and They smile in an affable style,
Which is seldom accorded to Me.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,
Is certain as certain can be
Of a highly paid post which is claimed by a host
Of seniors—including Me.

Careless and lazy is he,
Greatly inferior to Me.
What is the spell that you manage so well,
Commonplace Potiphar G.?

Lovely Mehitabel Lee,
Let me inquire of thee,
Should I have riz to what Potiphar is
Hadst thou been mated to Me?

DELILAH

We have another Viceroy now, those days are dead and done
Of Delilah Aberyswith and depraved Ulysses Gunne.

DELILAH ABERYSWITH was a lady—not too young—
With a perfect taste in dresses and a badly-bitted tongue,
With a thirst for information, and a greater thirst for praise,
And a little house in Simla in the Prehistoric Days.

By reason of her marriage to a gentleman in power,
Delilah was acquainted with the gossip of the hour;
And many little secrets, of a half-official kind,
Were whispered to Delilah and she bore them all in mind.

She patronised extensively a man, Ulysses Gunne,
Whose mode of earning money was a low and shameful one.
He wrote for divers papers which, as everybody knows,
Is worse than serving in a shop or scaring off the crows.

He praised her 'queenly beauty' first; and, later on, he hinted
At the 'vastness of her intellect' with compliment unstinted.
He went with her a-riding, and his love for her was such
That he lent her all his horses and—she galled them very much.

One day, They brewed a secret of a fine financial sort;
It related to Appointments, to a Man and a Report.
'Twas almost worth the keeping [only seven people knew it],
And Gunne rose up to seek the truth and patiently ensue it.

It was a Viceroy's Secret, but—perhaps the wine was red—
Perhaps an Aged Councillor had lost his aged head—
Perhaps Delilah's eyes were bright—Delilah's whispers sweet—
The Aged Member told her what 'twere treason to repeat.

Ulysses went a-riding, and they talked of love and flowers;
Ulysses went a-calling, and he called for several hours;
Ulysses went a-waltzing, and Delilah helped him dance—
Ulysses let the waltzes go, and waited for his chance.

The summer sun was setting, and the summer air was still,
The couple went a-walking in the shade of Summer Hill,
The wasteful sunset faded out in turkis-green and gold,
Ulysses pleaded softly, and . . . that bad Delilah told!

Next morn, a startled Empire learnt the all-important news;
Next week, the Aged Councillor was shaking in his shoes;
Next month, I met Delilah and she did not show the least
Hesitation in affirming that Ulysses was a 'beast.'

. . . . . .

We have another Viceroy now, those days are dead and done
Of Delilah Aberyswith and most mean Ulysses Gunne!

A LEGEND OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE

This is the reason why Rustum Beg,
Rajah of Kolazai,
Drinketh the 'simpkin' and brandy peg,
Maketh the money to fly,
Vexeth a Government, tender and kind,
Also—but this is a detail—blind.

RUSTUM BEG of Kolazai—slightly backward Native State—
Lusted for a C. S. I.—so began to sanitate.
Built a Gaol and Hospital—nearly built a City drain—
Till his faithful subjects all thought their ruler was insane.

Strange departures made he then—yea, Departments stranger still,
Half a dozen Englishmen helped the Rajah with a will.
Talked of noble aims and high, hinted of a future fine
For the State of Kolazai, on a strictly Western line.

Rajah Rustum held his peace; lowered octroi dues a half;
Organised a State Police; purified the Civil Staff;
Settled cess and tax afresh in a very liberal way;
Cut temptations of the flesh—also cut the Bakhshi's pay;

Roused his Secretariat to a fine Mahratta fury,
By a Hookum hinting at supervision of dasturi;
Turned the State of Kolazai very nearly upside-down;
When the end of May was nigh waited his achievement crown.

Then the Birthday honours came. Sad to state and sad to see,
Stood against the Rajah's name nothing more than C. I. E.!

. . . . . .

Things were lively for a week in the State of Kolazai,
Even now the people speak of that time regretfully

How he disendowed the Gaol—stopped at once the City drain;
Turned to beauty fair and frail—got his senses back again;
Doubled taxes, cesses, all; cleared away each new-built thana;
Turned the two-lakh Hospital into a superb Zenana;

Heaped upon the Bakhshi Sahib wealth and honours manifold;
Clad himself in Eastern garb—squeezed his people as of old.
Happy, happy Kolazai! Never more will Rustum Beg
Play to catch the Viceroy's eye. He prefers the 'simpkin' peg.

THE STORY OF URIAH

'Now there were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.'

JACK BARRETT went to Quetta
Because they told him to.
He left his wife at Simla
On three-fourths his monthly screw.
Jack Barrett died at Quetta
Ere the next month's pay he drew.

Jack Barrett went to Quetta,
He didn't understand
The reason of his transfer
From the pleasant mountain-land:
The season was September,
And it killed him out of hand.

Jack Barrett went to Quetta
And there gave up the ghost:
Attempting two men's duty
In that very healthy post;
And Mrs. Barrett mourned for him
Five lively months at most.

Jack Barrett's bones at Quetta
Enjoy profound repose;

But I shouldn't be astonished
If now his spirit knows
The reason of his transfer
From the Himalayan snows.

And, when the Last Great Bugle Call
Adown the Hurnai throbs,
When the last grim joke is entered
In the big black Book of Jobs,
And Quetta graveyards give again
Their victims to the air,
I shouldn't like to be the man,
Who sent Jack Barrett there.

THE POST THAT FITTED

Though tangled and twisted the course of true love,
This ditty explains
No tangle's so tangled it cannot improve
If the Lover has brains.

ERE the steamer bore him Eastward, Sleary was engaged to marry
An attractive girl at Tunbridge, whom he called 'my little Carrie.'
Sleary's pay was very modest; Sleary was the other way.
Who can cook a two-plate dinner on eight paltry dibs a day?

Long he pondered o'er the question in his scantly furnished quarters—
Then proposed to Minnie Boffkin, eldest of Judge Boffkin's daughters.
Certainly an impecunious Subaltern was not a catch,
But the Boffkins knew that Minnie mightn't make another match.

So they recognised the business and, to feed and clothe the bride,
Got him made a Something Something somewhere on the Bombay side.

Anyhow, the billet carried pay enough for him to marry—
As the artless Sleary put it:—'Just the thing for me and Carrie.'

Did he, therefore, jilt Miss Boffkin—impulse of a baser mind?
No! He started epileptic fits of an appalling kind.
[Of his modus operandi only this much I could gather:—
'Pears' shaving sticks will give you little taste and lots of lather.']

Frequently in public places his affliction used to smite
Sleary with distressing vigour—always in the Boffkins' sight.
Ere a week was over Minnie weepingly returned his ring,
Told him his 'unhappy weakness' stopped all thought of marrying.

Sleary bore the information with a chastened holy joy,—
Epileptic fits don't matter in Political employ,—
Wired three short words to Carrie—took his ticket, packed his kit—
Bade farewell to Minnie Boffkin in one last, long, lingering fit.

Four weeks later, Carrie Sleary read—and laughed until she wept—
Mrs. Boffkin's warning letter on the 'wretched epilept.'
Year by year, in pious patience, vengeful Mrs. Boffkin sits
Waiting for the Sleary babies to develop Sleary's fits.

A CODE OF MORALS

Lest you should think this story true
I merely mention I
Evolved it lately. 'Tis a most
Unmitigated misstatement.

NOW Jones had left his new-wed bride to keep his house in order,
And hied away to the Hurrum Hills above the Afghan border,
To sit on a rock with a heliograph, but ere he left he taught
His wife the working of the Code that sets the miles at naught.

And Love had made him very sage, as Nature made her fair;
So Cupid and Apollo linked, per heliograph, the pair.
At dawn, across the Hurrum Hills, he flashed her counsel wise—
At e'en, the dying sunset bore her husband's homilies.

He warned her 'gainst seductive youths in scarlet clad and gold,
As much as 'gainst the blandishments paternal of the old;
But kept his gravest warnings for (hereby the ditty hangs)
That snowy-haired Lothario, Lieutenant-General Bangs.

'Twas General Bangs, with Aide and Staff, that tittupped on the way,
When they beheld a heliograph tempestuously at play.
They thought of Border risings, and of stations sacked and burnt—
So stopped to take the message down—and this is what they learnt:—

'Dash dot dot, dot, dot dash, dot dash dot' twice. The General swore.
'Was ever General Officer addressed as "dear" before?
"My Love," i' faith! "My Duck," Gadzooks! "My darling popsy-wop!"
Spirit of great Lord Wolseley, who is on that mountain top?'

The artless Aide-de-camp was mute; the gilded Staff were still,
As, dumb with pent-up mirth, they booked that message from the hill;
For clear as summer-lightning flare, the husband's warning ran:—
'Don't dance or ride with General Bangs—a most immoral man.'

[At dawn, across the Hurrum Hills, he flashed her counsel wise—
But, howsoever Love be blind, the world at large hath eyes.]
With damnatory dot and dash he heliographed his wife
Some interesting details of the General's private life.

The artless Aide-de-camp was mute; the shining Staff were still,
And red and ever redder grew the General's shaven gill.
And this is what he said at last (his feelings matter not):—
'I think we've tapped a private line. Hi! Threes about there! Trot!'

All honour unto Bangs, for ne'er did Jones thereafter know
By word or act official who read off that helio.;
But the tale is on the Frontier, and from Michni to Mool-tan
They know the worthy General as 'that most immoral man.'

PUBLIC WASTE

Walpole talks of 'a man and his price,'
List to a ditty queer—
The sale of a Deputy-Acting-Vice-
Resident-Engineer
Bought like a bullock, hoof and hide,
By the Little Tin Gods on the Mountain Side.

BY the laws of the Family Circle 'tis written in letters of brass
That only a Colonel from Chatham can manage the Railways of State,
Because of the gold on his breeks, and the subjects wherein he must pass;
Because in all matters that deal not with Railways his knowledge is great.

Now Exeter Battleby Tring had laboured from boyhood to eld
On the Lines of the East and the West, and eke of the North and South.
Many Lines had he built and surveyed—important the posts which he held;
And the Lords of the Iron Horse were dumb when he opened his mouth.

Black as the raven his garb, and his heresies jettier still—
Hinting that Railways required lifetimes of study and knowledge.
Never clanked sword by his side—Vauban he knew not nor drill—
Nor was his name on the list of the men who had passed through the 'College.'

Wherefore the Little Tin Gods harried their little tin souls,
Seeing he came not from Chatham, jingled no spurs at his heels,
Knowing that, nevertheless, was he first on the Government rolls
For the billet of 'Railway Instructor to Little Tin Gods on Wheels.'

Letters not seldom they wrote him, 'having the honour to state,'
It would be better for all men if he were laid on the shelf:
Much would accrue to his bank-book, and he consented to wait
Until the Little Tin Gods built him a berth for himself.

'Special, well paid, and exempt from the Law of the Fifty and Five,
Even to Ninety and Nine'—these were the terms of the pact:
Thus did the Little Tin Gods (long may Their Highnesses thrive!)
Silence his mouth with rupees, keeping their Circle intact;

Appointing a Colonel from Chatham who managed the
Bhamo State Line
(The which was one mile and one furlong—a guaranteed
twenty-inch gauge),
So Exeter Battleby Tring consented his claims to re-
sign,
And died, on four thousand a month, in the ninetieth
year of his age.

WHAT HAPPENED

HURREE CHUNDER MOOKERJEE, pride of
Bow Bazar,
Owner of a native press, 'Barrishter-at-Lar
Waited on the Government with a claim to wear
Sabres by the bucketful, rifles by the pair.

Then the Indian Government winked a wicked wink,
Said to Chunder Mookerjee: 'Stick to pen and ink.
They are safer implements, but, if you insist,
We will let you carry arms wheresoe'er you list.'

Hurree Chunder Mookerjee sought the gunsmith and
Bought the tubes of Lancaster, Ballard, Dean, and
Bland,
Bought a shiny bowie-knife, bought a town-made sword,
Jingled like a carriage-horse when he went abroad.

But the Indian Government, always keen to please,
Also gave permission to horrid men like these—
Yar Mahommed Yusufzai, down to kill or steal,
Chimbu Singh from Bikaneer, Tantia the Bhil.

Killar Khan the Marri chief, Jowar Singh the Sikh,
Nubbee Baksh, Punjabi Jat, Abdul Huq Rafiq—
He was a Wahabi; last, little Boh Hla-oo
Took advantage of the act—took a Snider too.

They were unenlightened men, Ballard knew them not,
They procured their swords and guns chiefly on the spot,
And the lore of centuries, plus a hundred fights,
Made them slow to disregard one another's rights.

With a unanimity dear to patriot hearts,
All those hairy gentlemen out of foreign parts
Said: 'The good old days are back—let us go to war!'
Swaggered down the Grand Trunk Road into Bow Bazar.

Nubbee Baksh, Punjabi Jat, found a hide-bound flail,
Chimbu Singh from Bikaneer oiled his Tonk jezail,
Yar Mahommed Yusufzai spat and grinned with glee
As he ground the butcher-knife of the Khyberee.

Jowar Singh, the Sikh, procured sabre, quoit and mace,
Abdul Huq, Wahabi, took the dagger from its place,
While amid the jungle-grass danced and grinned and jabbered
Little Boh Hla-oo and cleared the dah-blade from the scabbard.

What become of Mookerjee? Soothly, who can say?
Yar Mahommed only grins in a nasty way,
Jowar Singh is reticent, Chimbu Singh is mute,
But the belts of all of them simply bulge with loot.

What became of Ballard's guns? Afghans black and grubby
Sell them for their silver weight to the men of Pubbi;
And the shiny bowie-knife and the town-made sword are
Hanging in a Marri camp just across the Border.

WHAT HAPPENED

What became of Mookerjee? Ask Mahommed Yar
Prodding Siva's sacred bull down the Bow Bazar.
Speak to placid Nubbee Baksh—question land and sea—
Ask the Indian Congress men—only don't ask me!

THE MAN WHO COULD WRITE

Shun—shun the Bowl! That fatal, facile drink
  Has ruined many geese who dipped their quills in't,
Bribe, murder, marry, but steer clear of Ink
  Save when you write receipts for paid-up bills in't.
There may be silver in the 'blue-black'—all
I know of is the iron and the gall.

BOANERGES BLITZEN, servant of the Queen,
  Is a dismal failure—is a Might-have-been.
  In a luckless moment he discovered men
Rise to high position through a ready pen.

Boanerges Blitzen argued therefore—'I,
With the selfsame weapon, can attain as high.'
Only he did not possess when he made the trial,
Wicked wit of C-lv-n, irony of L—l.

[Men who spar with Government need, to back their
    blows,
Something more than ordinary journalistic prose.]

Never young Civilian's prospects were so bright,
Till an Indian paper found that he could write:
Never young Civilian's prospects were so dark,
When the wretched Blitzen wrote to make his mark.

Certainly he scored it, bold, and black, and firm,
In that Indian paper—made his seniors squirm,
Quoted office scandals, wrote the tactless truth—
Was there ever known a more misguided youth?

When the Rag he wrote for praised his plucky game,
Boanerges Blitzen felt that this was fame.
When the men he wrote of shook their heads and swore,
Boanerges Blitzen only wrote the more;

Posed as Young Ithuriel, resolute and grim,
Till he found promotion didn't come to him;
Till he found that reprimands weekly were his lot,
And his many Districts curiously hot.

Till he found his furlough strangely hard to win,
Boanerges Blitzen didn't care a pin:
Then it seemed to dawn on him something wasn't right—
Boanerges Blitzen put it down to 'spite.'

Languished in a District desolate and dry;
Watched the Local Government yearly pass him by;
Wondered where the hitch was; called it most unfair.
. . . . . .
That was seven years ago—and he still is there.

PINK DOMINOES

'They are fools who kiss and tell'—
Wisely has the poet sung.
Man may hold all sorts of posts
If he'll only hold his tongue.

JENNY and Me were engaged, you see,
On the eve of the Fancy Ball;
So a kiss or two was nothing to you
Or any one else at all.

Jenny would go in a domino—
Pretty and pink but warm;
While I attended, clad in a splendid
Austrian uniform.

Now we had arranged, through notes exchanged
Early that afternoon,
At Number Four to waltz no more,
But to sit in the dusk and spoon.

[I wish you to see that Jenny and Me
Had barely exchanged our troth;
So a kiss or two was strictly due
By, from, and between us both.]

PINK DOMINOES

When Three was over, an eager lover,
I fled to the gloom outside;
And a Domino came out also
Whom I took for my future bride.

That is to say, in a casual way,
I slipped my arm around her;
With a kiss or two (which is nothing to you),
And ready to kiss I found her.

She turned her head and the name she said
Was certainly not my own;
But ere I could speak, with a smothered shriek
She fled and left me alone.

Then Jenny came, and I saw with shame,
She'd doffed her domino;
And I had embraced an alien waist—
But I did not tell her so.

Next morn I knew that there were two
Dominoes pink, and one
Had cloaked the spouse of Sir Julian Vouse,
Our big Political gun.

Sir J. was old, and her hair was gold,
And her eye was a blue cerulean;
And the name she said when she turned her head
Was not in the least like 'Julian.'

Now wasn't it nice, when want of pice
Forbade us twain to marry,
That old Sir J. in the kindest way,
Made me his Secre-tarry?

MUNICIPAL

'Why is my District death-rate low?'
Said Binks of Hezabad.
'Well, drains and sewage-outfalls are
My own peculiar fad.
I learnt a lesson once. It ran
Thus,' quoth that most veracious man:—

IT was an August evening and, in snowy garments clad,
I paid a round of visits in the lines of Hezabad;
When, presently, my Waler saw, and did not like at all,
A Commissariat elephant careering down the Mall.

I couldn't see the driver, and across my mind it rushed
That that Commissariat elephant had suddenly gone musth.
I didn't care to meet him, and I couldn't well get down,
So I let the Waler have it, and we headed for the town.

The buggy was a new one and—praise Dykes!—it stood the strain,
Till the Waler jumped a bullock just above the City Drain;
And the next that I remember was a hurricane of squeals,
And the creature making toothpicks of my five-foot patent wheels.

He seemed to want the owner, so I fled, distraught with fear,
To the Main Drain sewage-outfall while he snorted in my ear—
Reached the four-foot drain-head safely and, in darkness and despair,
Felt the brute's proboscis fingering my terror-stiffened hair.

Heard it trumpet on my shoulder—tried to crawl a little higher—
Found the Main Drain sewage-outfall blocked, some eight feet up, with mire;
And, for twenty reeking minutes, Sir, my very marrow froze,
While the trunk was feeling blindly for a purchase on my toes!

It missed me by a fraction, but my hair was turning gray
Before they called the drivers up and dragged the brute away.
Then I sought the City Elders, and my words were very plain.
They flushed that four-foot drain-head and—it never choked again.

You may hold with surface-drainage, and the sun-for-garbage cure,
Till you've been a periwinkle shrinking coyly up a sewer.
I believe in well-flushed culverts. . . .
This is why the death-rate's small;
And, if you don't believe me, get shikarred yourself.
That's all.

THE LAST DEPARTMENT

Twelve hundred million men are spread
About this Earth, and I and You
Wonder, when You and I are dead,
What will those luckless millions do?

'NONE whole or clean,' we cry, 'or free from stain
Of favour.' Wait awhile, till we attain
The Last Department where nor fraud nor fools,
Nor grade nor greed, shall trouble us again.

Fear, Favour, or Affection—what are these
To the grim Head who claims our services?
I never knew a wife or interest yet
Delay that pukka step, miscalled 'decease';

When leave, long over-due, none can deny;
When idleness of all Eternity
Becomes our furlough, and the marigold
Our thriftless, bullion-minting Treasury

Transferred to the Eternal Settlement,
Each in his strait, wood-scantled office pent,
No longer Brown reverses Smith's appeals,
Or Jones records his Minute of Dissent.

And One, long since a pillar of the Court,
As mud between the beams thereof is wrought;
  And One who wrote on phosphates for the crops
Is subject-matter of his own Report.

[These be the glorious ends whereto we pass—
Let Him who Is, go call on Him who Was;
  And He shall see the mallie steals the slab
For currie-grinder, and for goats the grass.]

A breath of wind, a Border bullet's flight.
A draught of water, or a horse's fright—
  The droning of the fat Sheristadar
Ceases, the punkah stops, and falls the night

For you or Me. Do those who live decline
The step that offers, or their work resign?
  Trust me, To-day's Most Indispensables,
Five hundred men can take your place or mine.

OTHER VERSES

MY RIVAL

I GO to concert, party, ball—
What profit is in these?
I sit alone against the wall
And strive to look at ease.
The incense that is mine by right
They burn before Her shrine;
And that's because I'm seventeen
And She is forty-nine.

I cannot check my girlish blush,
My colour comes and goes;
I redden to my finger-tips,
And sometimes to my nose.
But She is white where white should be
And red where red should shine.
The blush that flies at seventeen
Is fixed at forty-nine.

I wish I had Her constant cheek:
I wish that I could sing
All sorts of funny little songs
Not quite the proper thing.
I'm very gauche and very shy,
Her jokes aren't in my line;
And, worst of all, I'm seventeen,
While She is forty-nine.

MY RIVAL

The young men come, the young men go,
Each pink and white and neat,
She's older than their mothers, but
They grovel at Her feet.
They walk beside Her 'rickshaw-wheels—
None ever walk by mine;
And that's because I'm seventeen
And She is forty-nine.

She rides with half a dozen men
(She calls them 'boys' and 'mashers'),
I trot along the Mall alone;
My prettiest frocks and sashes
Don't help to fill my programme-card,
And vainly I repine
From ten to two a. m. Ah me!
Would I were forty-nine.

She calls me 'darling,' 'pet,' and 'dear,'
And 'sweet retiring maid.'
I'm always at the back, I know,
She puts me in the shade.
She introduces me to men,
'Cast' lovers, I opine,
For sixty takes to seventeen,
Nineteen to forty-nine.

But even She must older grow
And end Her dancing days,
She can't go on for ever so
At concerts, balls, and plays.
One ray of priceless hope I see
Before my footsteps shine;
Just think, that She'll be eighty-one
When I am forty-nine.

TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS

WILL you conquer my heart with your beauty;
my soul going out from afar?
Shall I fall to your hand as a victim of crafty
and cautious shikar?

Have I met you and passed you already, unknowing,
unthinking and blind?
Shall I meet you next session at Simla, oh sweetest and
best of your kind?

Does the P. and O. bear you to meward, or, clad in
short frocks in the West,
Are you growing the charms that shall capture and
torture the heart in my breast?

Will you stay in the Plains till September—my passion
as warm as the day?
Will you bring me to book on the Mountains or where
the thermantidotes play?

When the light of your eyes shall make pallid the mean
lesser lights I pursue,
And the charm of your presence shall lure me from love
of the gay 'thirteen-two';

TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS

When the peg and the pigskin shall please not; when I buy me Calcutta-built clothes;
When I quit the Delight of Wild Asses; forswearing the swearing of oaths;

As a deer to the hand of the hunter when I turn 'mid the gibes of my friends;
When the days of my freedom are numbered, and the life of the bachelor ends.

Ah Goddess! child, spinster, or widow—as of old on Mars Hill when they raised
To the God that they knew not an altar—so I, a young Pagan, have praised

The Goddess I know not nor worship; yet, if half the men tell me be true,
You will come in the future, and therefore the verses are written to you.

THE RUPAIYAT OF OMAR KAL'VIN

[Allowing for the difference 'twixt prose and rhymed exaggeration, this ought to reproduce the sense of what Sir A— told the nation some time ago, when the Government struck from our incomes two per cent.]

NOW the New Year, reviving last Year's Debt,
The Thoughtful Fisher casteth wide his Net;
So I with begging Dish and ready Tongue
Assail all Men for all that I can get.

Imports indeed are gone with all their Dues—
Lo! Salt a Lever that I dare not use,
Nor may I ask the Tillers in Bengal—
Surely my Kith and Kin will not refuse!

Pay—and I promise by the Dust of Spring,
Retrenchment. If my promises can bring
Comfort, Ye have them now a thousand-fold—
By Allah! I will promise Anything!

Indeed, indeed, Retrenchment oft before
I swore—but did I mean it when I swore?
And then, and then, We wandered to the Hills,
And so the Little Less became Much More.

Whether at Boileaugunge or Babylon,
I know not how the wretched Thing is done,
  The Items of Receipt grow surely small;
The Items of Expense mount one by one.

I cannot help it. What have I to do
With One and Five, or Four, or Three, or Two?
  Let Scribes spit Blood and Sulphur as they please.
Or Statesmen call me foolish—Heed not you.

Behold, I promise—Anything You will.
Behold, I greet you with an empty Till—
  Ah! Fellow-Sinners, of your Charity
Seek not the Reason of the Dearth but fill.

For if I sinned and fell, where lies the Gain
Of Knowledge? Would it ease you of your Pain
  To know the tangled Threads of Revenue,
I ravel deeper in a hopeless Skein?

'Who hath not Prudence'—what was it I said,
Of Her who paints her Eyes and tires Her Head,
  And jibes and mocks the People in the Street,
And fawns upon them for Her thriftless Bread?

Accursed is She of Eve's daughters—She
Hath cast off Prudence, and Her End shall be
  Destruction . . . Brethren, of your Bounty grant
Some portion of your daily Bread to Me.

PAGETT, M. P.

The Toad beneath the harrow knows
Exactly where each tooth-point goes.
The Butterfly upon the road
Preaches contentment to that Toad.

PAGETT, M. P., was a liar, and a fluent liar therewith,—
He spoke of the heat of India as the 'Asian Solar Myth';
Came on a four months' visit, to 'study the East,' in November.
And I got him to sign an agreement vowing to stay till September.

March came in with the koil. Pagett was cool and gay,
Called me a 'bloated Brahmin,' talked of my 'princely pay,'
March went out with the roses. 'Where is your heat?' said he.
'Coming,' said I to Pagett. 'Skittles!' said Pagett, M. P.

April began with the punkah, coolies, and prickly-heat,—
Pagett was dear to mosquitoes, sandflies found him a treat.
He grew speckled and lumpy—hammered, I grieve to say,
Aryan brothers who fanned him, in an illiberal way.

May set in with a dust-storm,—Pagett went down with
the sun.
All the delights of the season tickled him one by one.
Imprimis—ten days' 'liver'—due to his drinking beer;
Later, a dose of fever—slight, but he called it severe.

Dysent'ry touched him in June, after the Chota Bursat—
Lowered his portly person—made him yearn to depart.
He didn't call me a 'Brahmin' or 'bloated,' or 'over-
paid,'
But seemed to think it a wonder that any one ever stayed.

July was a trifle unhealthy,—Pagett was ill with fear,
Called it the 'Cholera Morbus,' hinted that life was dear.
He babbled of 'eastern exile,' and mentioned his home
with tears;
But I hadn't seen my children for close upon seven years.

We reached a hundred and twenty once in the Court at
noon,
[I've mentioned Pagett was portly] Pagett went off in a
swoon.
That was an end to the business; Pagett, the perjured, fled
With a practical, working knowledge of 'Solar Myths'
in his head.

And I laughed as I drove from the station, but the mirth
died out on my lips
As I thought of the fools like Pagett who write of their
'Eastern trips,'
And the sneers of the travelled idiots who duly mis-
govern the land,
And I prayed to the Lord to deliver another one into my
hand.

LA NUIT BLANCHE

A much-discerning Public hold
The Singer generally sings
Of personal and private things,
And prints and sells his past for gold.

Whatever I may here disclaim,
The very clever folk I sing to
Will most indubitably cling to
Their pet delusion, just the same.

I HAD seen, as dawn was breaking
And I staggered to my rest,
Tara Devi softly shaking
From the Cart Road to the crest.
I had seen the spurs of Jakko
Heave and quiver, swell and sink.
Was it Earthquake or tobacco,
Day of Doom or Night of Drink?

In the full, fresh, fragrant morning
I observed a camel crawl,
Laws of gravitation scorning,
On the ceiling and the wall;
Then I watched a fender walking,
And I heard gray leeches sing,
And a red-hot monkey talking
Did not seem the proper thing.

Then a Creature, skinned and crimson,
  Ran about the floor and cried,
And they said I had the 'jims' on,
  And they dosed me with bromide,
And they locked me in my bed-room—
  Me and one wee Blood Red Mouse—
Though I said:—'To give my head room
  You had best unroof the house.'

But my words were all unheeded,
  Though I told the grave M. D.
That the treatment really needed
  Was a dip in open sea
That was lapping just below me,
  Smooth as silver, white as snow,
And it took three men to throw me
  When I found I could not go.

Half the night I watched the Heavens
  Fizz like '81 champagne—
Fly to sixes and to sevens,
  Wheel and thunder back again.
And when all was peace and order
  Save one planet nailed askew,
Much I wept because my warder
  Would not let me set it true.

After frenzied hours of waiting,
  When the Earth and Skies were dumb,
Pealed an awful voice dictating
  An interminable sum,

Changing to a tangled story—
'What she said you said I said—'
Till the Moon arose in glory,
And I found her . . . in my head;

Then a Face came, blind and weeping,
And It couldn't wipe Its eyes,
And it muttered I was keeping
Back the moonlight from the skies;
So I patted It for pity,
But It whistled shrill with wrath,
And a huge, black Devil City
Poured its peoples on my path.

So I fled with steps uncertain
On a thousand-year long race,
But the bellying of the curtain
Kept me always in one place;
While the tumult rose and maddened
To the roar of Earth on fire,
Ere it ebbed and sank and saddened
To a whisper tense as wire.

In intolerable stillness
Rose one little, little star,
And it chuckled at my illness
And it mocked me from afar;
And its brethren came and eyed me,
Called the Universe to aid,
Till I lay, with naught to hide me,
'Neath the Scorn of all Things Made.

LA NUIT BLANCHE

Dun and saffron, robed and splendid,
  Broke the solemn, pitying Day,
And I knew my pains were ended,
  And I turned and tried to pray;
But my speech was shattered wholly,
  And I wept as children weep,
Till the dawn-wind, softly, slowly,
  Brought to burning eyelids sleep.

THE LOVERS' LITANY

EYES of gray—a sodden quay,
Driving rain and falling tears,
As the steamer wears to sea
In a parting storm of cheers.
Sing, for Faith and Hope are high—
None so true as you and I—
Sing the Lovers' Litany:—
'Love like ours can never die!'

Eyes of black—a throbbing keel,
Milky foam to left and right;
Whispered converse near the wheel
In the brilliant tropic night.
Cross that rules the Southern Sky!
Stars that sweep, and wheel, and fly.
Hear the Lovers' Litany:—
'Love like ours can never die!'

Eyes of brown—a dusty plain
Split and parched with heat of June.
Flying hoof and tightened rein,
Hearts that beat the old, old tune.
Side by side the horses fly,
Frame we now the old reply
Of the Lovers' Litany:—
'Love like ours can never die!'

THE LOVERS' LITANY

Eyes of blue—the Simla Hills
Silvered with the moonlight hoar;
Pleading of the waltz that thrills,
Dies and echoes round Benmore.
'Mabel,' 'Officers,' 'Good-bye,'
Glamour, wine, and witchery—
On my soul's sincerity,
'Love like ours can never die!'

Maidens, of your charity,
Pity my most luckless state.
Four times Cupid's debtor I—
Bankrupt in quadruplicate.
Yet, despite this evil case,
An a maiden showed me grace,
Four-and-forty times would I
Sing the Lovers' Litany:—
'Love like ours can never die!'

A BALLAD OF BURIAL

'Saint Praxed's ever was the Church for peace.'

IF down here I chance to die,
Solemnly I beg you take
All that is left of 'I'
To the Hills for old sake's sake.
Pack me very thoroughly
In the ice that used to slake
Pegs I drank when I was dry.
This observe for old sake's sake.

To the railway station hie,
There a single ticket take
For Umballa—goods-train—I
Shall not mind delay or shake.
I shall rest contentedly
Spite of clamour coolies make;
Thus in state and dignity
Send me up for old sake's sake.

Next the sleepy Babu wake,
Book a Kalka van 'for four.'
Few, I think, will care to make
Journeys with me any more

As they used to do of yore.
I shall need a 'special' break—
Thing I never took before.
Get me one for old sake's sake.

After that—arrangements make,
No hotel will take me in,
And a bullock's back would break
'Neath the teak and leaden skin.
Tonga-ropes are frail and thin,
Or, did I a back seat take,
In a tonga I might spin.
Do your best for old sake's sake.

After that—your work is done.
Recollect a Padre must
Mourn the dear departed one—
Throw the ashes and the dust.
Don't go down at once. I trust
You will find excuse to take
'Three days' casual on the bust,' —
Get your fun for old sake's sake.

I could never stand the Plains.
Think of blazing June and May,
Think of those September rains
Yearly till the Judgment Day!
I should never rest in peace,
I should sweat and lie awake.
Rail me then, on my decease,
To the Hills for old sake's sake.

THE OVERLAND MAIL

[Foot-service to the Hills.]

IN the name of the Empress of India, make way,
O Lords of the Jungle, wherever you roam,
The woods are astir at the close of the day—
We exiles are waiting for letters from Home.
Let the robber retreat—let the tiger turn tail—
In the Name of the Empress, the Overland Mail!

With a jingle of bells as the dusk gathers in,
He turns to the foot-path that heads up the hill—
The bags on his back and a cloth round his chin,
And, tucked in his waistbelt, the Post Office bill:—
'Despatched on this date, as received from the rail,
Per runner, two bags of the Overland Mail.'

Is the torrent in spate? He must ford it or swim.
Has the rain wrecked the road? He must climb by the cliff.
Does the tempest cry halt? What are tempests to him?
The service admits not a 'but' or an 'if.'
While the breath's in his mouth, he must bear without fail,
In the Name of the Empress, the Overland Mail.

From aloe to rose-oak, from rose-oak to fir,
  From level to upland, from upland to crest,
From rice-field to rock-ridge, from rock-ridge to spur,
  Fly the soft-sandalled feet, strains the brawny brown
    chest.
From rail to ravine—to the peak from the vale—
Up, up through the night goes the Overland Mail.

There's a speck on the hill-side, a dot on the road—
  A jingle of bells on the foot-path below—
There's a scuffle above in the monkey's abode—
  The world is awake and the clouds are aglow.
For the great Sun himself must attend to the hail:—
'In the Name of the Empress, the Overland Mail!'

DIVIDED DESTINIES

IT was an artless Bandar, and he danced upon a pine,
And much I wondered how he lived, and where the beast might dine,
And many many other things, till, o'er my morning smoke,
I slept the sleep of idleness and dreamt that Bandar spoke.

He said:—'Oh man of many clothes! Sad crawler on the Hills!
Observe, I know not Ranken's shop, nor Ranken's monthly bills!
I take no heed to trousers or the coats that you call dress;
Nor am I plagued with little cards for little drinks at Mess.

'I steal the bunnia's grain at morn, at noon and eventide
(For he is fat and I am spare), I roam the mountain side,
I follow no man's carriage, and no, never in my life
Have I flirted at Peliti's with another Bandar's wife.

'Oh man of futile fopperies—unnecessary wraps;
I own no ponies in the hills, I drive no tall-wheeled traps.

I buy me not twelve-button gloves, "short-sixes" eke,
or rings,
Nor do I waste at Hamilton's my wealth on "pretty
things."

'I quarrel with my wife at home, we never fight abroad;
But Mrs. B. has grasped the fact I am her only lord.
I never heard of fever—dumps nor debts depress my
soul;
And I pity and despise you!' Here he pouched my
breakfast-roll.

His hide was very mangy and his face was very red,
And ever and anon he scratched with energy his head.
His manners were not always nice, but how my spirit
cried
To be an artless Bandar loose upon the mountain side!

So I answered:—'Gentle Bandar, an inscrutable Decree
Makes thee a gleesome fleasome Thou and me a wretched
Me.
Go! Depart in peace, my brother, to thy home amid
the pine;
Yet forget not once a mortal wished to change his lot
with thine!'

THE MASQUE OF PLENTY

Argument.—The Indian Government being minded to discover the economic condition of their lands, sent a Committee to enquire into it; and saw that it was good.

SCENE.—The wooded heights of Simla. The Incarnation of the Government of India in the raiment of the Angel of Plenty sings, to pianoforte accompaniment:—

'How sweet is the shepherd's sweet life,
From the dawn to the even he strays—
He shall follow his sheep all the day
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.
(adagio dim.) Filled with praise!'

(largendo con sp.) Now this is the position,
Go make an inquisition
Into their real condition
As swiftly as ye may.
(p) Ay, paint our swarthy billions
The richest of vermilions
Ere two well-led cotillions
Have danced themselves away.

Turkish Patrol, as able and intelligent Investigators wind down the Himalayas:—

What is the state of the Nation? What is its occupation?
Hi! get along, get along, get along,—lend us the information!

(dim.) Census the byle and the yabu—capture a first-class Babu,
Set him to cut Gazetteers—Gazetteers. . . .
(ff) What is the state of the Nation, etc. etc.

Interlude, from Nowhere in Particular, to stringed and Oriental instruments.

Our cattle reel beneath the yoke they bear—
The earth is iron and the skies are brass—
And faint with fervour of the flaming air
The languid hours pass.

The well is dry beneath the village tree—
The young wheat withers ere it reach a span,
And belts of blinding sand show cruelly
Where once the river ran.

Pray, brothers, pray, but to no earthly King—
Lift up your hands above the blighted grain,
Look westward—if they please, the Gods shall bring
Their mercy with the rain.

Look westward—bears the blue no brown cloud-bank?
Nay, it is written—wherefore should we fly?
On our own field and by our cattle's flank
Lie down, lie down to die!

Semi-Chorus.

By the plumed heads of Kings
Waving high,
Where the tall corn springs
O'er the dead.
If they rust or rot we die,
If they ripen we are fed.
Very mighty is the power of our Kings!

THE MASQUE OF PLENTY

Triumphal return to Simla of the Investigators, attired after the manner of Dionysus, leading a pet tiger-cub in wreaths of rhubarb leaves, symbolical of India under medical treatment. They sing:—

We have seen, we have written—behold it, the proof of our manifold toil!
In their hosts they assembled and told it—the tale of the sons of the soil.

We have said of the Sickness—'Where is it?'—and of Death—'It is far from our ken,'—
We have paid a particular visit to the affluent children of men.
We have trodden the mart and the well-curb—we have stooped to the bield and the byre;
And the King may the forces of Hell curb, for the People have all they desire!

Castanets and step dance:

Oh, the dom and the mag and the thakur and the thag,
And the nat and the brinjaree,
And the bunnia and the ryot are as happy and as quiet
And as plump as they can be!
Yes, the jain and the jat in his stucco-fronted hut,
And the bounding bazugar,
By the favour of the King, are as fat as anything,
They are—they are—they are!

Recitative, Government of India, with white satin wings and electro-plated harp:—

How beautiful upon the mountains—in peace reclining,
Thus to be assured that our people are unanimously dining.

And though there are places not so blessed as others in natural advantages, which, after all, was only to be expected,
Proud and glad are we to congratulate you upon the work you have thus ably effected.
(Cres.) How be-ewtiful upon the mountains!

Hired Band, brasses only, full chorus:—

God bless the Squire
And all his rich relations
Who teach us poor people
We eat our proper rations—
We eat our proper rations,
In spite of inundations,
Malarial exhalations,
And casual starvations,
We have, we have, they say we have—
We have our proper rations!

(Cornet)

Which nobody can deny!
If he does he tells a lie—
We are all as willing as Barkis—
We all of us loves the Markiss—
We all of us stuffs our ca-ar-kis—
With food until we die! (da capo).

Chorus of the Crystallised Facts.

Before the beginning of years
There came to the rule of the State
Men with a pair of shears,
Men with an Estimate—
Strachey with Muir for leaven,

Lytton with locks that fell,
Ripon fooling with Heaven,
And Temple riding like H—ll!
And the bigots took in hand
Cess and the falling of rain,
And the measure of sifted sand
The dealer puts in the grain—
Imports by land and sea,
To uttermost decimal worth,
And registration—free—
In the houses of death and of birth:
And fashioned with pens and paper,
And fashioned in black and white,
With Life for a flickering taper
And Death for a blazing light—
With the Armed and the Civil Power,
That his strength might endure for a span,
From Adam's Bridge to Peshawur,
The Much Administered man.

In the towns of the North and the East,
They gathered as unto rule,
They bade him starve his priest
And send his children to school.
Railways and roads they wrought,
For the needs of the soil within;
A time to squabble in court,
A time to bear and to grin.
And gave him peace in his ways,
Jails—and Police to fight,
Justice at length of days,
And Right—and Might in the Right.
His speech is of mortgaged bedding,

On his kine he borrows yet,
At his heart is his daughter's wedding,
In his eye foreknowledge of debt.
He eats and hath indigestion,
He toils and he may not stop;
His life is a long-drawn question
Between a crop and a crop.

THE MARE'S NEST

JANE Austen Beecher Stowe de Rouse
Was good beyond all earthly need;
But, on the other hand, her spouse
Was very, very bad indeed.
He smoked cigars, called churches slow,
And raced—but this she did not know.

For Belial Machiavelli kept
The little fact a secret, and,
Though o'er his minor sins she wept,
Jane Austen did not understand
That Lilly—thirteen-two and bay—
Absorbed one half her husband's pay.

She was so good she made him worse
(Some women are like this, I think);
He taught her parrot how to curse,
Her Assam monkey how to drink.
He vexed her righteous soul until
She went up, and he went down hill.

Then came the crisis, strange to say,
Which turned a good wife to a better.
A telegraphic peon, one day,
Brought her—now, had it been a letter
For Belial Machiavelli, I
Know Jane would just have let it lie.

But 'twas a telegram instead,
  Marked 'urgent,' and her duty plain
To open it. Jane Austen read:—
  'Your Lilly's got a cough again.
Can't understand why she is kept
At your expense.' Jane Austen wept.

It was a misdirected wire,
  Her husband was at Shaitanpore.
She spread her anger, hot as fire,
  Through six thin foreign sheets or more,
Sent off that letter, wrote another
To her solicitor—and mother.

Then Belial Machiavelli saw
  Her error and, I trust, his own,
Wired to the minion of the Law,
  And travelled wifeward—not alone.
For Lilly—thirteen-two and bay—
Came in a horse-box all the way.

There was a scene—a weep or two—
  With many kisses. Austen Jane
Rode Lilly all the season through,
  And never opened wires again.
She races now with Belial. This
Is very sad, but so it is.

THE BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING-HOUSE

That night, when through the mooring-chains
The wide-eyed corpse rolled free,
To blunder down by Garden Reach
And rot at Kedgeree,
The tale the Hughli told the shoal
The lean shoal told to me.

'TWAS Fultah Fisher's boarding-house,
Where sailor-men reside,
And there were men of all the ports
From Mississip to Clyde,
And regally they spat and smoked,
And fearsomely they lied.

They lied about the purple Sea
That gave them scanty bread,
They lied about the Earth beneath,
The Heavens overhead,
For they had looked too often on
Black rum when that was red.

They told their tales of wreck and wrong,
Of shame and lust and fraud,
They backed their toughest statements with
The Brimstone of the Lord,
And crackling oaths went to and fro
Across the fist-banged board.

And there was Hans the blue-eyed Dane,
  Bull-throated, bare of arm,
Who carried on his hairy chest
  The maid Ultruda's charm—
The little silver crucifix
  That keeps a man from harm.

And there was Jake Without-the-Ears,
  And Pamba the Malay,
And Carboy Gin the Guinea cook,
  And Luz from Vigo Bay,
And Honest Jack who sold them slops
  And harvested their pay.

And there was Salem Hardieker,
  A lean Bostonian he—
Russ, German, English, Halfbreed, Finn,
  Yank, Dane, and Portugee,
At Fultah Fisher's boarding-house
  They rested from the sea.

Now Anne of Austria shared their drinks,
  Collinga knew her fame,
From Tarnau in Galicia
  To Jaun Bazar she came,
To eat the bread of infamy
  And take the wage of shame.

She held a dozen men to heel—
  Rich spoil of war was hers,
In hose and gown and ring and chain,
  From twenty mariners,
And, by Port Law, that week, men called
  Her Salem Hardieker's.

But seamen learnt—what landsmen know—
That neither gifts nor gain
Can hold a winking Light o' Love
Or Fancy's flight restrain,
When Anne of Austria rolled her eyes
On Hans the blue-eyed Dane.

Since Life is strife, and strife means knife,
From Howrah to the Bay,
And he may die before the dawn
Who liquored out the day,
In Fultah Fisher's boarding-house
We woo while yet we may.

But cold was Hans the blue-eyed Dane,
Bull-throated, bare of arm,
And laughter shook the chest beneath
The maid Ultruda's charm—
The little silver crucifix
That keeps a man from harm.

'You speak to Salem Hardieker,
You was his girl, I know.
I ship mineselfs to-morrow, see,
Und round the Skaw we go,
South, down the Cattegat, by Hjelm,
To Besser in Saro.'

When love rejected turns to hate
All ill betide the man.
'You speak to Salem Hardieker'—
She spoke as woman can.
A scream—a sob—'He called me—names!'
And then the fray began.

An oath from Salem Hardieker,
A shriek upon the stairs,
A dance of shadows on the wall,
A knife-thrust unawares—
And Hans came down, as cattle drop,
Across the broken chairs.

. . . . . .

In Anne of Austria's trembling hands
The weary head fell low:—
'I ship mineselfs to-morrow straight
For Besser in Saro;
Und there Ultruda comes to me
At Easter, und I go

'South, down the Cattegat— What's here?
There—are—no—lights—to—guide!'
The mutter ceased, the spirit passed.
And Anne of Austria cried
In Fultah Fisher's boarding-house
When Hans the mighty died.

Thus slew they Hans the blue-eyed Dane,
Bull-throated, bare of arm,
But Anne of Austria looted first
The maid Ultruda's charm—
The little silver crucifix
That keeps a man from harm.

POSSIBILITIES

AY, lay him 'neath the Simla pine—
A fortnight fully to be missed.
Behold, we lose our fourth at whist,
A chair is vacant where we dine!

His place forgets him; other men
Have bought his ponies, guns, and traps.
His fortune is the Great Perhaps
And that cool rest-house down the glen,

Whence he shall hear, as spirits may,
Our mundane revel on the height,
Shall watch each flashing 'rickshaw-light
Sweep on to dinner, dance, and play.

Benmore shall woo him to the ball
With lighted rooms and braying band;
And he shall hear and understand
'Dream Faces' better than us all.

For, think you, as the vapours flee
Across Sanjaolie after rain,
His soul may climb the hill again
To each old field of victory.

POSSIBILITIES

Unseen, who women held so dear,
  The strong man's yearning to his kind
  Shall shake at most the window-blind,
Or dull awhile the card-room's cheer.

In his own place of power unknown,
  His Light o' Love another's flame,
  His dearest pony galloped lame,
And he an alien and alone.

Yet may he meet with many a friend—
  Shrewd shadows, lingering long unseen
  Among us when 'God save the Queen'
Shows even 'extras' have an end.

And, when we leave the heated room,
  And, when at four the lights expire,
  The crew shall gather round the fire
And mock our laughter in the gloom.

Talk as we talked, and they ere death—
  First wanly, dance in ghostly wise,
  With ghosts of tunes for melodies,
And vanish at the morning's breath.

ARITHMETIC ON THE FRONTIER

A GREAT and glorious thing it is
To learn, for seven years or so,
The Lord knows what of that and this,
Ere reckoned fit to face the foe—
The flying bullet down the Pass,
That whistles clear:—'All flesh is grass.'

Three hundred pounds per annum spent
On making brain and body meeter
For all the murderous intent
Comprised in 'villainous saltpetre'!
And after—ask the Yusufzaies
What comes of all our 'ologies.

A scrimmage in a Border Station—
A canter down some dark defile—
Two thousand pounds of education
Drops to a ten-rupee jezail.
The Crammer's boast, the Squadron's pride,
Shot like a rabbit in a ride!

No proposition Euclid wrote,
No formulæ the text-books know,
Will turn the bullet from your coat,
Or ward the tulwar's downward blow.
Strike hard who cares—shoot straight who can—
The odds are on the cheaper man.

ARITHMETIC ON THE FRONTIER

One sword-knot stolen from the camp
  Will pay for all the school-expenses
Of any Kurrum Valley scamp
  Who knows no word or moods and tenses,
But, being blessed with perfect sight,
Picks off our messmates left and right.

With home-bred hordes the hill-sides teem,
  The troop-ships bring us one by one,
At vast expense of time and steam,
  To slay Afridis where they run.
The 'captives of our bow and spear'
Are cheap, alas! as we are dear.

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

(Lady Dufferin's Fund for Medical Aid to the Women of India.)

HOW shall she know the worship we would do her?
The walls are high and she is very far.
How shall the women's message reach unto her
Above the tumult of the packed bazar?
Free wind of March, against the lattice blowing,
Bear thou our thanks lest she depart unknowing.

Go forth across the fields we may not roam in,
Go forth beyond the trees that rim the city
To whatsoe'er fair place she hath her home in,
Who dowered us with wealth of love and pity.
Out of our shadow pass and seek her singing—
'I have no gifts but Love alone for bringing.'

Say that we be a feeble folk who greet her,
But old in grief, and very wise in tears;
Say that we, being desolate, entreat her
That she forget us not in after years;
For we have seen the light, and it were grievous
To dim that dawning if our lady leave us.

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

By life that ebbed with none to staunch the failing,
By Love's sad harvest garnered in the spring,
When Love in Ignorance wept unavailing
O'er young buds dead before their blossoming;
By all the gray owl watched, the pale moon viewed,
In past grim years declare our gratitude!

By hands uplifted to the Gods that heard not,
By gifts that found no favour in their sight,
By faces bent above the babe that stirred not,
By nameless horrors of the stifling night;
By ills foredone, by peace her toils discover,
Bid Earth be good beneath and Heaven above her!

If she have sent her servants in our pain,
If she have fought with Death and dulled his sword;
If she have given back our sick again,
And to the breast the weakling lips restored,
Is it a little thing that she has wrought?
Then Life and Death and Motherhood be nought.

Go forth, O wind, our message on thy wings,
And they shall hear thee pass and bid thee speed,
In reed-roofed hut, or white-walled home of kings,
Who have been helpen by her in their need.
All spring shall give thee fragrance, and the wheat
Shall be a tasselled floorcloth to thy feet.

Haste, for our hearts are with thee, take no rest!
Loud-voiced ambassador, from sea to sea
Proclaim the blessing, manifold, confest,
Of those in darkness by her hand set free,
Then very softly to her presence move,
And whisper: 'Lady, lo, they know and love!'

THE BETROTHED

'You must choose between me and your cigar.'—A Glasgow breach of promise case

OPEN the old cigar-box, get me a Cuba stout,
For things are running crossways, and Maggie and I are out.

We quarrelled about Havanas—we fought o'er a good cheroot,
And I know she is exacting, and she says I am a brute.

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider a space;
In the soft blue veil of the vapour musing on Maggie's face.

Maggie is pretty to look at—Maggie's a loving lass,
But the prettiest cheeks must wrinkle, the truest of loves must pass.

There's peace in a Laranaga, there's calm in a Henry Clay,
But the best cigar in an hour is finished and thrown away—

Thrown away for another as perfect and ripe and brown—
But I could not throw away Maggie for fear o' the talk o' the town!

Maggie, my wife at fifty, gray and dour and old,
With never another Maggie to purchase for love or gold!

And the light of Days that have Been the dark of the Days that Are,
And Love's torch stinking and stale, like the butt of a dead cigar—

The butt of a dead cigar you are bound to keep in your pocket—
With never a new one to light tho' it's charred and black to the socket.

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider a while—
Here is a mild Manilla—there is a wifely smile.

Which is the better portion—bondage bought with a ring,
Or a harem of dusky beauties, fifty tied in a string?

Counsellors cunning and silent—comforters true and tried,
And never a one of the fifty to sneer at a rival bride.

Thought in the early morning, solace in time of woes,
Peace in the hush of the twilight, balm ere my eyelids close.—

This will the fifty give me, asking nought in return,
With only a Suttee's passion—to do their duty and burn.

This will the fifty give me. When they are spent and dead,
Five times other fifties shall be my servants instead.

The furrows of far-off Java, the isles of the Spanish Main,
When they hear my harem is empty will send me my brides again.

I will take no heed to their raiment, nor food for their mouths withal,
So long as the gulls are nesting, so long as the showers fall.

I will scent 'em with best Vanilla, with tea will I temper their hides,
And the Moor and the Mormon shall envy as they read of the tale of my brides.

For Maggie has written a letter to give me my choice between
The wee little whimpering Love and the great god Nick o' Teen.

And I have been servant of Love for barely a twelve-month clear,
But I have been Priest of Havanas a matter of seven year;

And the gloom of my bachelor days is flecked with the cheery light
Of the stumps that I burned to Friendship and Pleasure and Work and Fight.

And I turn my eyes to the future that Maggie and I must prove,
But the only light on the marshes is the Will-o'-the-Wisp of Love.

Will it see me safe through my journey or leave me
bogged in the mire?
Since a puff of tobacco can cloud it, shall I follow the
fitful fire?

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider anew—
Old friends, and who is Maggie that I should abandon
you?

A million surplus Maggies are willing to bear the yoke;
And a woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a
Smoke.

Light me another Cuba. I hold to my first-sworn vows.
If Maggie will have no rival, I'll have no Maggie for
spouse!

A BALLADE OF JAKKO HILL

ONE moment bid the horses wait,
Since tiffin is not laid till three,
Below the upward path and strait
You climbed a year ago with me.
Love came upon us suddenly
And loosed—an idle hour to kill—
A headless, harmless armoury
That smote us both on Jakko Hill.

Ah Heaven! we would wait and wait
Through Time and to Eternity!
Ah Heaven! we would conquer Fate
With more than Godlike constancy!
I cut the date upon a tree—
Here stand the clumsy figures still:—
'10–7–85, A. D.'
Damp with the mist on Jakko Hill.

What came of high resolve and great,
And until Death fidelity?
Whose horse is waiting at your gate?
Whose 'rickshaw-wheels ride over me?
No Saint's, I swear; and—let me see
To-night what names your programme fill—
We drift asunder merrily,
As drifts the mist on Jakko Hill!

A BALLADE OF JAKKO HILL

L'Envoi

Princess, behold our ancient state
  Has clean departed; and we see
'Twas Idleness we took for Fate
  That bound light bonds on you and me.
Amen! Here ends the comedy
  Where it began in all good will.
Since Love and Leave together flee
  Like driven mist on Jakko Hill!

THE PLEA OF THE SIMLA DANCERS

Too late, alas! the song
To remedy the wrong;—
The rooms are taken from us, swept and garnished for their fate,
But these tear-besprinkled pages
Shall attest to future ages
That we cried against the crime of it—too late, alas! too late!

'WHAT have we ever done to bear this grudge?'
Was there no room save only in Benmore
For docket, duftar, and for office drudge,
That you usurp our smoothest dancing-floor?
Must babus do their work on polished teak?
Are ball-rooms fittest for the ink you spill?
Was there no other cheaper house to seek?
You might have left them all at Strawberry Hill.

We never harmed you! Innocent our guise,
Dainty our shining feet, our voices low;
And we revolved to divers melodies,
And we were happy but a year ago.
To-night, the moon that watched our lightsome wiles—
That beamed upon us through the deodars—
Is wan with gazing on official files,
And desecrating desks disgust the stars.

THE PLEA OF THE SIMLA DANCERS

Nay! by the memory of tuneful nights—
  Nay! by the witchery of flying feet—
Nay! by the glamour of foredone delights—
  By all things merry, musical, and meet—
By wine that sparkled, and by sparkling eyes—
  By wailing waltz—by reckless gallop's strain—
By dim verandas and by soft replies,
  Give us our ravished ball-room back again.

Or—hearken to the curse we lay on you!
  The ghosts of waltzes shall perplex your brain,
And murmurs of past merriment pursue
  Your 'wildered clerks that they indite in vain;
And when you count your poor Provincial millions,
  The only figures that your pen shall frame
Shall be the figures of dear, dear cotillions
  Danced out in tumult long before you came.

Yea! 'See Saw' shall upset your estimates,
  'Dream Faces' shall your heavy heads bemuse,
Because your hand, unheeding, desecrates
  Our temple fit for higher, worthier use.
And all the long verandas, eloquent
  With echoes of a score of Simla years,
Shall plague you with unbidden sentiment—
  Babbling of kisses, laughter, love, and tears.

So shall you mazed amid old memories stand,
  So shall you toil, and shall accomplish naught.
And ever in your ears a phantom Band
  Shall blare away the staid official thought.

Wherefore—and ere this awful curse be spoken,
Cast out your swarthy, sacrilegious train,
And give—ere dancing cease and hearts be broken—
Give us our ravished ball-room back again!

'AS THE BELL CLINKS'

AS I left the Halls at Lumley, rose the vision of a comely
Maid last season worshipped dumbly, watched with fervour from afar;
And I wondered idly, blindly, if the maid would greet me kindly.
That was all—the rest was settled by the clinking tonga-bar.
Yea, my life and hers were coupled by the tonga coupling-bar.

For my misty meditation, at the second changing-station,
Suffered sudden dislocation, fled before the tuneless jar
Of a Wagner obbligato, scherzo, double-hand staccato,
Played on either pony's saddle by the clacking tonga-bar—
Played with human speech, I fancied, by the jigging, jolting bar.

'She was sweet,' thought I, 'last season, but 'twere surely wild unreason
Such a tiny hope to freeze on as was offered by my Star,
When she whispered, something sadly:—"I—we feel your going badly!"'

'And you let the chance escape you?' rapped the rattling
tonga-bar.
'What a chance and what an idiot!' clicked the vicious
tonga-bar.

Heart of man—Oh heart of putty! Had I gone by
Kakahutti,
On the old Hill-road and rutty, I had 'scaped that fatal
car,
But his fortune each must bide by, so I watched the
mile-stones slide by.
To—'You call on Her to-morrow!'—fugue with cym-
bals by the bar—
'You must call on Her to-morrow!'—post-horn gallop
by the bar.

Yet a farther stage my goal on—we were whirling down
to Solon,
With a double lurch and roll on, best foot foremost, ganz
und gar—
'She was very sweet,' I hinted. 'If a kiss had been im-
printed—?'
''Would ha' saved a world of trouble!' clashed the busy
tonga-bar.
''Been accepted or rejected!' banged and clanged the
tonga-bar.

Then a notion wild and daring, 'spite the income tax's
paring
And a hasty thought of sharing—less than many in-
comes are,
Made me put a question private (you can guess what I
would drive at),

'You must work the sum to prove it,' clanked the careless tonga-bar.
'Simple Rule of Two will prove it,' lilted back the tonga-bar.

It was under Khyraghaut I mused:—'Suppose the maid be haughty—
[There are lovers rich—and forty] wait some wealthier Avatar?
Answer, monitor untiring, 'twixt the ponies twain perspiring!'
'Faint heart never won fair lady,' creaked the straining tonga-bar.
'Can I tell you ere you ask Her?' pounded slow the tonga-bar.

Last, the Tara Devi turning showed the lights of Simla burning,
Lit my little lazy yearning to a fiercer flame by far.
As below the Mall we jingled, through my very heart it tingled—
Did the iterated order of the threshing tonga-bar:—
'Try your luck—you can't do better!' twanged the loosened tonga-bar.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA

DIM dawn behind the tamarisks—the sky is saffron-yellow—
As the women in the village grind the corn,
And the parrots seek the river-side, each calling to his fellow
That the Day, the staring Eastern Day, is born.
Oh the white dust on the highway! Oh the stenches in the byway!
Oh the clammy fog that hovers over earth!
And at Home they're making merry 'neath the white and scarlet berry—
What part have India's exiles in their mirth?

Full day behind the tamarisks—the sky is blue and staring—
As the cattle crawl afield beneath the yoke,
And they bear One o'er the field-path, who is past all hope or caring,
To the ghat below the curling wreaths of smoke.
Call on Rama, going slowly, as ye bear a brother lowly—
Call on Rama—he may hear, perhaps, your voice!
With our hymn-books and our psalters we appeal to other altars,
And to-day we bid 'good Christian men rejoice'!

High noon behind the tamarisks—the sun is hot above us—
As at Home the Christmas Day is breaking wan.
They will drink our healths at dinner—those who tell us how they love us,
And forget us till another year be gone!
Oh the toil that knows no breaking! Oh the heimweh, ceaseless, aching!
Oh the black dividing Sea and alien Plain!
Youth was cheap—wherefore we sold it. Gold was good—we hoped to hold it,
And to-day we know the fulness of our gain.

Gray dusk behind the tamarisks—the parrots fly together—
As the Sun is sinking slowly over Home;
And his last ray seems to mock us shackled in a lifelong tether
That drags us back howe'er so far we roam.
Hard her service, poor her payment—she in ancient, tattered raiment—
India, she the grim Stepmother of our kind.
If a year of life be lent her, if her temple's shrine we enter,
The door is shut—we may not look behind.

Black night behind the tamarisks—the owls begin their chorus—
As the conches from the temple scream and bray.
With the fruitless years behind us and the hopeless years before us,
Let us honour, oh my brothers, Christmas Day!

Call a truce, then, to our labours—let us feast with friends and neighbours,
And be merry as the custom of our caste;
For, if 'faint and forced the laughter,' and if sadness follow after,
We are richer by one mocking Christmas past.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD

THERE'S a widow in sleepy Chester
Who weeps for her only son;
There's a grave on the Pabeng River,
A grave that the Burmans shun,
And there's Subadar Prag Tewarri
Who tells how the work was done.

A Snider squibbed in the jungle—
Somebody laughed and fled,
And the men of the First Shikaris
Picked up their Subaltern dead,
With a big blue mark in his forehead
And the back blown out of his head.

Subadar Prag Tewarri,
Jemadar Hira Lal,
Took command of the party,
Twenty rifles in all,
Marched them down to the river
As the day was beginning to fall.

They buried the boy by the river,
A blanket over his face—
They wept for their dead Lieutenant,
The men of an alien race—
They made a samadh in his honour,
A mark for his resting-place.

For they swore by the Holy Water,
They swore by the salt they ate,
That the soul of Lieutenant Eshmitt Sahib
Should go to his God in state;
With fifty file of Burman
To open him Heaven's gate.

The men of the First Shikaris
Marched till the break of day,
Till they came to the rebel village,
The village of Pabengmay—
A jingal covered the clearing,
Calthrops hampered the way.

Subadar Prag Tewarri,
Bidding them load with ball,
Halted a dozen rifles
Under the village wall;
Sent out a flanking-party
With Jemadar Har Lal.

The men of the First Shikaris
Shouted and smote and slew,
Turning the grinning jingal
On to the howling crew.
The Jemadar's flanking-party
Butchered the folk who flew.

Long was the morn of slaughter,
Long was the list of slain,
Five score heads were taken
Five score heads and twain;
And the men of the First Shikaris
Went back to their grave again,

Each man bearing a basket
  Red as his palms that day,
Red as the blazing village—
  The village of Pabengmay.
And the 'drip-drip-drip' from the baskets
  Reddened the grass by the way.

They made a pile of their trophies
  High as a tall man's chin,
Head upon head distorted
  Set in a sightless grin,
Anger and pain and terror
  Stamped on the smoke-scorched skin.

Subadar Prag Tewarri
  Put the head of the Boh
On the top of the mound of triumph,
  The head of his son below,
With the sword and the peacock-banner
  That the world might behold and know.

Thus the samadh was perfect,
  Thus was the lesson plain
Of the wrath of the First Shikaris—
  The price of a white man slain;
And the men of the First Shikaris
  Went back into camp again.

Then a silence came to the river,
  A hush fell over the shore,
And Bohs that were brave departed,
  And Sniders squibbed no more;
    For the Burmans said
    That a kullah's head
Must be paid for with heads five score.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD

There's a widow in sleepy Chester
  Who weeps for her only son;
There's a grave on the Pabeng River,
  A grave that the Burmans shun,
And there's Subadar Prag Tewarri
  Who tells how the work was done.

AN OLD SONG

So long as 'neath the Kalka hills
The tonga-horn shall ring,
So long as down the Solon dip
The hard-held ponies swing,
So long as Tara Devi sees
The lights o' Simla town,
So long as Pleasure calls us up,
And duty drives us down,
If you love me as I love you
What pair so happy as we two?

So long as Aces take the King,
Or backers take the bet,
So long as debt leads men to wed,
Or marriage leads to debt,
So long as little luncheons, Love,
And scandal hold their vogue,
While there is sport at Annandale
Or whisky at Jutogh,
If you love me as I love you
What knife can cut our love in two?

So long as down the rocking floor
The raving polka spins,
So long as Kitchen Lancers spur
The maddened violins,

AN OLD SONG

So long as through the whirling smoke
We hear the oft-told tale:—
'Twelve hundred in the Lotteries,'
And Whatshername for sale?
If you love me as I love you
We'll play the game and win it too.

So long as Lust or Lucre tempt
Straight riders from the course,
So long as with each drink we pour
Black brewage of Remorse,
So long as those unloaded guns
We keep beside the bed,
Blow off, by obvious accident,
The lucky owner's head,
If you love me as I love you
What can Life kill or Death undo?

So long as Death 'twixt dance and dance
Chills best and bravest blood
And drops the reckless rider down
The rotten, rain-soaked khud,
So long as rumours from the North
Make loving wives afraid,
So long as Burma takes the boy
And typhoid kills the maid,
If you love me as I love you
What knife can cut our love in two?

By all that lights our daily life
Or works our lifelong woe,
From Boileaugunge to Simla Downs,
And those grim glades below,

AN OLD SONG

Where heedless of the flying hoof
And clamour overhead,
Sleep, with the gray langur for guard,
Our very scornful Dead,
If you love me as I love you
All Earth is servant to us two!

By Docket, Billet-doux, and File,
By Mountain, Cliff, and Fir,
By Fan and Sword and Office-box,
By Corset, Plume, and Spur,
By Riot, Revel, Waltz, and War,
By Women, Work, and Bills,
By all the life that fizzes in
The everlasting Hills,
If you love me as I love you
What pair so happy as we two?

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

1

IF It be pleasant to look on, stalled in the packed serai,
Does not the Young Man try Its temper and pace ere he buy?
If She be pleasant to look on, what does the Young Man say?
'Lo! She is pleasant to look on, give Her to me to-day!'

2

Yea, though a Kafir die, to him is remitted Jehannum
If he borrowed in life from a native at sixty per cent per annum.

3

Blister we not for bursati? So when the heart is vext,
The pain of one maiden's refusal is drowned in the pain of the next.

4

The temper of chums, the love of your wife, and a new piano's tune—
Which of the three will you trust at the end of an Indian June?

5

Who are the rulers of Ind—to whom shall we bow the knee?
Make your peace with the women, and men will make you L. G.

6

Does the woodpecker flit round the young ferash? Does grass clothe a new-built wall?
Is she under thirty the woman who holds a boy in her thrall?

7

If She grow suddenly gracious—reflect. Is it all for thee?
The blackbuck is stalked through the bullock, and Man through jealousy.

8

Seek not for favour of women. So shall you find it indeed.
Does not the boar break cover just when you're lighting a weed?

9

If He play, being young and unskilful, for shekels of silver and gold,
Take His money, my son, praising Allah. The kid was ordained to be sold.

10

With a 'weed' among men or horses verily this is the best,
That you work him in office or dog-cart lightly—but give him no rest.

11

Pleasant the snaffle of Courtship, improving the manners and carriage;
But the colt who is wise will abstain from the terrible thorn-bit of Marriage.

12

As the thriftless gold of the babul so is the gold that we spend
On a Derby Sweep, or our neighbour's wife, or the horse that we buy from a friend.

13

The ways of man with a maid be strange, yet simple and tame
To the ways of a man with a horse, when selling or racing that same.

14

In public Her face turneth to thee, and pleasant Her smile when ye meet.
It is ill. The cold rocks of El-Gidar smile thus on the waves at their feet.
In public Her face is averted, with anger She nameth thy name.
It is well. Was there ever a loser content with the loss of the game?

15

If She have spoken a word, remember thy lips are sealed,
And the Brand of the Dog is upon him by whom is the secret revealed.
If She have written a letter, delay not an instant but burn it.
Tear it in pieces, O Fool, and the wind to her mate shall return it!
If there be trouble to Herward, and a lie of the blackest can clear,
Lie, while thy lips can move or a man is alive to hear.

16

My Son, if a maiden deny thee and scufflingly bid thee give o'er,
Yet lip meets with lip at the lastward—get out! She has been there before.
They are pecked on the ear and the chin and the nose who are lacking in lore.

17

If we fall in the race, though we win, the hoofslide is scarred on the course.
Though Allah and Earth pardon Sin, remaineth for ever Remorse.

18

'By all I am misunderstood!' if the Matron shall say, or the Maid:—
'Alas! I do not understand,' my son, be thou nowise afraid.
In vain in the sight of the Bird is the net of the Fowler displayed.

19

My son, if I, Hafiz, thy father, take hold of thy knees in my pain,
Demanding thy name on stamped paper, one day or one hour—refrain.
Are the links of thy fetters so light that thou cravest another man's chain?

THE MOON OF OTHER DAYS

BENEATH the deep veranda's shade,
When bats begin to fly,
I sit me down and watch—alas!
Another evening die.
Blood-red behind the sere ferash
She rises through the haze.
Sainted Diana! can that be
The Moon of Other Days?

Ah! shade of little Kitty Smith,
Sweet Saint of Kensington!
Say, was it ever thus at Home
The Moon of August shone,
When arm-in-arm we wandered long
Through Putney's evening haze,
And Hammersmith was Heaven beneath
The Moon of Other Days?

But Wandle's stream is Sutlej now,
And Putney's evening haze
The dust that half a hundred kine
Before my window raise.
Unkempt, unclean, athwart the mist
The seething city looms,
In place of Putney's golden gorse
The sickly babul blooms.

Glare down, old Hecate, through the dust
  And bid the pie-dog yell,
Draw from the drain its typhoid germ,
  From each bazar its smell;
Yea, suck the fever from the tank
  And sap my strength therewith:
Thank Heaven, you show a smiling face
  To little Kitty Smith!

THE FALL OF JOCK GILLESPIE

THIS fell when dinner-time was done—
'Twixt the first an' the second rub—
That oor mon Jock cam' hame again
To his rooms ahint the Club.

An' syne he laughed, an' syne he sang,
An' syne we thocht him fou,
An' syne he trumped his partner's trick,
An' garred his partner rue.

Then up and spake an elder mon,
That held the Spade its Ace—
'God save the lad! Whence comes the licht
That wimples on his face?'

An' Jock he sniggered, an' Jock he smiled,
An' ower the card-brim wunk:—
'I'm a' too fresh fra' the stirrup-peg,
Maybe that I am drunk.'

'There's whusky brewed in Galashiels,
An' L. L. L. forbye;
But never liquor lit the low
That keeks fra' oot your eye.

'There's a thrid o' hair on your dress-coat breast,
Aboon the heart a wee?'
'Oh! that is fra' the lang-haired Skye
That slobbers ower me.'

'Oh! lang-haired Skyes are lovin' beasts,
An' terrier dogs are fair,
But never yet was terrier born
Wi' ell-lang gowden hair!

'There's a smirch o' pouther on your breast
Below the left lappel?'
'Oh! that is fra' my auld cigar,
Whenas the stump-end fell.'

'Mon Jock, ye smoke the Trichi coarse,
For ye are short o' cash.
An' best Havanas couldna leave
Sae white an' pure an ash.

'This nicht ye stopped a story braid,
An' stopped it wi' a curse—
Last nicht ye told that tale yoursel',
An' capped it wi' a worse!

'Oh! we're no fou! Oh! we're no fou!
But plainly we can ken
Ye're fallin', fallin' fra the band
O' cantie single men!'

An' it fell when siris-shaws were sere,
An' the nichts were lang and mirk,
In braw new breeks, wi' a gowden ring,
Oor Jockie gaed to the Kirk.

WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID

[June 21st, 1887]

BY the well, where the bullocks go
Silent and blind and slow—
By the field, where the young corn dies
In the face of the sultry skies,
They have heard, as the dull Earth hears
The voice of the wind of an hour,
The sound of the Great Queen's voice:—
'My God hath given me years,
Hath granted dominion and power:
And I bid you, O Land, rejoice.'

And the Ploughman settles the share
More deep in the grudging clod;
For he saith:—'The Wheat is my care,
And the rest is the will of God.
He sent the Mahratta spear
As He sendeth the rain,
And the Mlech, in the fated year,
Broke the spear in twain
And was broken in turn. Who knows
How our Lords make strife?
It is good that the young wheat grows,
For the bread is Life.'

Then, far and near, as the twilight drew,
  Hissed up to the scornful dark
Great serpents, blazing, of red and blue,
That rose and faded, and rose anew,
  That the Land might wonder and mark.
'To-day is a day of days,' they said,
'Make merry, O People, all!'
And the Ploughman listened and bowed his head:—
'To-day and to-morrow God's will,' he said,
As he trimmed the lamps on the wall.

'He sendeth the years that are good,
As He sendeth the dearth.
He giveth to each man his food,
Or Her food to the Earth.
Our Kings and our Queens are afar,
On their peoples be peace—
God bringeth the rain to the Bar,
That our cattle increase.'

And the Ploughman settled the share
More deep in the sun-dried clod:—
'Mogul, Mahratta, and Mlech from the North,
And White Queen over the Seas—
God raiseth them up and driveth them forth
As the dust of the ploughshare flies in the breeze;
But the Wheat and the Cattle are all my care,
And the rest is the will of God.'

THE UNDERTAKER'S HORSE

To-tschin-shu is condemned to death. How can he drink tea with the executioner?—Japanese Proverb.

THE eldest son bestrides him,
And the pretty daughter rides him,
And I meet him oft o' mornings on the Course;
And there wakens in my bosom
An emotion chill and gruesome
As I canter past the Undertaker's Horse.

Neither shies he nor is restive,
But a hideously suggestive
Trot, professional and placid, he affects;
And the cadence of his hoof-beats
To my mind this grim reproof beats:—
'Mend your pace, my friend, I'm coming. Who's the next?'

Ah! stud-bred of ill-omen,
I have watched the strongest go—men
Of pith and might and muscle—at your heels,
Down the plantain-bordered highway
(Heaven send it ne'er be my way!)
In a lacquered box and jetty upon wheels.

Answer, sombre beast and dreary,
Where is Brown, the young, the cheery,

Smith, the pride of all his friends and half the Force?
You were at that last dread dak
We must cover at a walk,
Bring them back to me, O Undertaker's Horse!

With your mane unhogged and flowing,
And your curious way of going,
And that business-like black crimping of your tail,
E'en with Beauty on your back, Sir,
Pacing as a lady's hack, Sir,
What wonder when I meet you I turn pale?

It may be you wait your time, Beast,
Till I write my last bad rhyme, Beast,
Quit the sunlight, cut the rhyming, drop the glass,
Follow after with the others,
Where some dusky heathen smothers
Us with marigolds in lieu of English grass.

Or, perchance, in years to follow,
I shall watch your plump sides hollow,
See Carnifex (gone lame) become a corse,
See old age at last o'erpower you,
And the Station Pack devour you—
I shall chuckle then, O Undertaker's Horse!

But to insult, jibe, and quest, I've
Still the hideously suggestive
Trot that hammers out the grim and warning text,
And I hear it hard behind me
In what place soe'er I find me:—
'Sure to catch you sooner or later. Who's the next?'

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

Lord Dufferin to Lord Lansdowne:—

SO here's your Empire. No more wine, then? Good.
We'll clear the Aides and khitmatgars away.
(You'll know that fat old fellow with the knife—
He keeps the Name Book, talks in English, too,
And almost thinks himself the Government.)
O Youth, Youth, Youth! Forgive me, you're so young.
Forty from sixty—twenty years of work
And power to back the working! Ay de mi!
You want to know, you want to see, to touch
And, by your lights, to act? It's natural.
I wonder can I help you. Let me try.
You saw—what did you see from Bombay east?
Enough to frighten any one but me?
Neat that! It frightened Me in Eighty-Four!
You shouldn't take a man from Canada
And bid him smoke in powder-magazines;
Nor with a Reputation such as—Bah!
That ghost has haunted me for twenty years,
My Reputation now full-blown . . . Your fault—
Yours, with your stories of the strife at Home,
Who's up, who's down, who leads and who is led—
One reads so much, one hears so little here.
Well, now's your turn of exile. I go back

To Rome and leisure. All roads lead to Rome.
Or books—the refuge of the destitute.
When you . . . That brings me back to India.
See!
Start clear. I couldn't. Egypt served my turn.
You'll never plumb the Oriental mind,
And if you did it isn't worth the toil.
Think of a sleek French priest in Canada;
Divide by twenty half-breeds; multiply
By twice the Sphinx's silence. There's your East,
And you're as wise as ever. So am I.
Accept on trust and work in darkness, strike
At venture, stumble forward, make your mark
(It's chalk on granite), then thank God no flame
Leaps from the rock to shrivel mark and man.
I'm clear—my mark is made. Three months of drouth
Had ruined much. It rained and washed away
The specks that might have gathered on my Name.
I took a country twice the size of France,
And shuttered up one doorway in the North.
I stand by those. You'll find that both will pay,
I pledged my Name on both—they're yours to-night.
Hold to them—they hold fame enough for two.
I'm old, but I shall live till Burma pays.
Men there—not German traders—Cr-sthw-te knows—
You'll find it in my papers. For the North
Guns always—quietly—but always guns.
You've seen your Council? Yes, they'll try to rule,
And prize their Reputations. Have you met
A grim lay-reader with a taste for coins,
And faith in Sin most men withhold from God?
He's gone to England. R-p-n knew his grip
And kicked. A Council always has its H-pes.

They look for nothing from the West but Death
Or Bath or Bournemouth. Here's their ground.
They fight
Until the middle classes take them back,
One of ten millions plus a C. S. I.
Or drop in harness. Legion of the Lost?
Not altogether—earnest, narrow men,
But chiefly earnest, and they'll do your work,
And end by writing letters to the 'Times.'
(Shall I write letters, answering H-nt-r—fawn
With R-p-n on the Yorkshire grocers? Ugh!)
They have their Reputations. Look to one—
I work with him—the smallest of them all,
White-haired, red-faced, who sat the plunging horse
Out in the garden. He's your right-hand man,
And dreams of tilting W-ls-y from the throne,
But while he dreams gives work we cannot buy;
He has his Reputation—wants the Lords
By way of Frontier Roads. Meantime, I think,
He values very much the hand that falls
Upon his shoulder at the Council table—
Hates cats and knows his business: which is yours.
Your business! Twice a hundred million souls.
Your business! I could tell you what I did
Some nights of Eighty-Five, at Simla, worth
A Kingdom's ransom. When a big ship drives
God knows to what new reef the man at the wheel
Prays with the passengers. They lose their lives,
Or rescued go their way; but he's no man
To take his trick at the wheel again—that's worse
Than drowning. Well, a galled Mashobra mule
(You'll see Mashobra) passed me on the Mall,
And I was—some fool's wife had ducked and bowed

To show the others I would stop and speak.
Then the mule fell—three galls, a hand-breadth each,
Behind the withers. Mrs. Whatsisname
Leers at the mule and me by turns, thweet thoul!
'How could they make him carry such a load!'
I saw—it isn't often I dream dreams—
More than the mule that minute—smoke and flame
From Simla to the haze below. That's weak.
You're younger. You'll dream dreams before you've done.
You've youth, that's one—good workmen—that means two—
Fair chances in your favour. Fate's the third.
I know what I did. Do you ask me, 'Preach'?
I answer by my past or else go back
To platitudes of rule—or take you thus
In confidence and say:—'You know the trick:
You've governed Canada. You know. You know!'
And all the while commend you to Fate's hand
(Here at the top one loses sight o' God),
Commend you, then, to something more than you—
The Other People's blunders and . . . that's all.
I'd agonise to serve you if I could.
It's incommunicable, like the cast
That drops the tackle with the gut adry.
Too much—too little—there's your salmon lost!
And so I tell you nothing—wish you luck,
And wonder—how I wonder!—for your sake,
And triumph for my own. You're young, you're young,
You hold to half a hundred Shibboleths.
I'm old. I followed Power to the last,
Gave her my best, and Power followed Me.
It's worth it—on my soul I'm speaking plain,

Here by the claret glasses!—worth it all.
I gave—no matter what I gave—I win.
I know I win. Mine's work, good work that lives!
A country twice the size of France—the North
Safeguarded. That's my record: sink the rest
And better if you can. The Rains may serve,
Rupees may rise—three pence will give you Fame—
It's rash to hope for sixpence—If they rise
Get guns, more guns, and lift the salt-tax.
Oh!
I told you what the Congress meant or thought?
I'll answer nothing. Half a year will prove
The full extent of time and thought you'll spare
To Congress. Ask a Lady Doctor once
How little Begums see the light—deduce
Thence how the True Reformer's child is born.
It's interesting, curious . . . and vile.
I told the Turk he was a gentleman.
I told the Russian that his Tartar veins
Bled pure Parisian ichor—and he purred.
The Congress doesn't purr. I think it swears.
You're young—you'll swear too ere you've reached the end.
The End! God help you, if there be a God!
(There must be one to startle Gl-dst-ne's soul
In that new land where all the wires are cut,
And Cr-ss snores anthems on the asphodel.)
God help you! And I'd help you if I could,
But that's beyond me. Yes, your speech was crude.
Sound claret after olives—yours and mine;
But Medoc slips into vin ordinaire
(I'll drink my first at Genoa to your health).
Raise it to Hock. You'll never catch my style.

And, after all, the middle-classes grip
The middle-class—for Brompton talk Earl's Court.
Perhaps you're right. I'll see you in the 'Times'—
A quarter-column of eye-searing print,
A leader once a quarter—then a war;
The Strand abellow through the fog:—'Defeat!'
''Orrible slaughter!' While you lie awake
And wonder. Oh, you'll wonder ere you're free!
I wonder now. The four years slide away
So fast, so fast, and leave me here alone.
R—y, C-lv-n, L—l, R-b-rts, B-ck, the rest,
Princes and Powers of Darkness, troops and trains
(I cannot sleep in trains), land piled on land,
Whitewash and weariness, red rockets, dust,
White snows that mocked me, palaces—with draughts,
And W-stl-nd with the drafts he couldn't pay,
Poor W-ls-n reading his obituary
Before he died, and H-pe, the man with bones,
And A-tch-s-n a dripping mackintosh
At Council in the Rains, his grating 'Sirr'
Half drowned by H-nt-r's silky:—'Bat, my lahd.'
Hunterian always: M-rsh-l spinning plates
Or standing on his head; the Rent Bill's roar,
A hundred thousand speeches, much red cloth,
And Smiths thrice happy if I call them Jones
(I can't remember half their names), or reined
My pony on the Mall to greet their wives.
More trains, more troops, more dust, and then all's done. . . .
Four years, and I forget. If I forget
How will they bear me in their minds? The North
Safeguarded—nearly (R-b-rts knows the rest),
A country twice the size of France annexed.

That stays at least. The rest may pass—may pass—
Your heritage—and I can teach you naught.
'High trust,' 'vast honour,' 'interests twice as vast,'
'Due reverence to your Council'—keep to those.
I envy you the twenty years you've gained,
But not the five to follow. What's that? One!
Two!—Surely not so late. Good-night. Don't dream.

THE GALLEY–SLAVE

OH gallant was our galley from her carven steering-wheel
To her figurehead of silver and her beak of hammered steel;
The leg-bar chafed the ankle and we gasped for cooler air,
But no galley on the water with our galley could compare!

Our bulkheads bulged with cotton and our masts were stepped in gold—
We ran a mighty merchandise of niggers in the hold;
The white foam spun behind us, and the black shark swam below,
As we gripped the kicking sweep-head and we made that galley go.

It was merry in the galley, for we revelled now and then—
If they wore us down like cattle, faith, we fought and loved like men!
As we snatched her through the water, so we snatched a minute's bliss,
And the mutter of the dying never spoiled the lovers' kiss.

Our women and our children toiled beside us in the dark—
They died, we filed their fetters, and we heaved them to the shark—
We heaved them to the fishes, but so fast the galley sped,
We had only time to envy, for we could not mourn our dead.

Bear witness, once my comrades, what a hard-bit gang were we—
The servants of the sweep-head but the masters of the sea!
By the hands that drove her forward as she plunged and yawed and sheered,
Woman, Man, or God or Devil, was there anything we feared?

Was it storm? Our fathers faced it and a wilder never blew;
Earth that waited for the wreckage watched the galley struggle through.
Burning noon or choking midnight, Sickness, Sorrow, Parting, Death?
Nay, our very babes would mock you had they time for idle breath.

But to-day I leave the galley and another takes my place;
There's my name upon the deck-beam—let it stand a little space.
I am free—to watch my messmates beating out to open main;
Free of all that Life can offer—save to handle sweep again.

By the brand upon my shoulder, by the gall of clinging steel,
By the welt the whips have left me, by the scars that never heal;
By eyes grown old with staring through the sun-wash on the brine,
I am paid in full for service—would that service still were mine!

Yet they talk of times and seasons and of woe the years bring forth,
Of our galley swamped and shattered in the rollers of the North.
When the niggers break the hatches and the decks are gay with gore,
And a craven-hearted pilot crams her crashing on the shore.

She will need no half-mast signal, minute-gun, or rocket-flare,
When the cry for help goes seaward, she will find her servants there.
Battered chain-gangs of the orlop, grizzled drafts of years gone by,
To the bench that broke their manhood, they shall lash themselves and die.

Hale and crippled, young and aged, paid, deserted, shipped away—
Palace, cot, and lazaretto shall make up the tale that day,
When the skies are black above them, and the decks ablaze beneath,
And the top-men clear the raffle with their clasp-knives in their teeth.

It may be that Fate will give me life and leave to row
once more—
Set some strong man free for fighting as I take awhile
his oar.
But to-day I leave the galley. Shall I curse her service
then?
God be thanked—whate'er comes after, I have lived and
toiled with Men!

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

WHERE the sober-coloured cultivator smiles
On his byles;
Where the cholera, the cyclone, and the crow
Come and go;
Where the merchant deals in indigo and tea,
Hides and ghi;
Where the Babu drops inflammatory hints
In his prints;
Stands a City—Charnock chose it—packed away
Near a Bay—
By the sewage rendered fetid, by the sewer
Made impure,
By the Sunderbunds unwholesome, by the swamp
Moist and damp;
And the City and the Viceroy, as we see,
Don't agree.

Once, two hundred years ago, the trader came
Meek and tame.
Where his timid foot first halted, there he stayed,
Till mere trade
Grew to Empire, and he sent his armies forth
South and North.
Till the country from Peshawar to Ceylon
Was his own.

Thus the mid-day halt of Charnock—more's the pity!
Grew a City.
As the fungus sprouts chaotic from its bed,
So it spread—
Chance-directed, chance-erected, laid and built
On the silt—
Palace, byre, hovel—poverty and pride—
Side by side;
And, above the packed and pestilential town,
Death looked down.

But the Rulers in that City by the Sea,
Turned to flee—
Fled, with each returning Spring-tide from its ills
To the Hills.
From the clammy fogs of morning, from the blaze
Of the days,
From the sickness of the noontide, from the heat,
Beat retreat;
For the country from Peshawar to Ceylon
Was their own.
But the Merchant risked the perils of the Plain
For his gain.

Now the resting-place of Charnock, 'neath the palms,
Asks an alms,
And the burden of its lamentation is
Briefly, this:—
'Because, for certain months, we boil and stew,
So should you.
Cast the Viceroy and his Council, to perspire
In our fire!'

And for answer to the argument, in vain
We explain
That an amateur Saint Lawrence cannot cry:—
'All must fry!'
That the Merchant risks the perils of the Plain
For his gain.
Nor can Rulers rule a house that men grow rich in,
From its kitchen.

Let the Babu drop inflammatory hints
In his prints;
And mature—consistent soul—his plan for stealing
To Darjeeling:
Let the Merchant seek, who makes his silver pile,
England's isle;
Let the City Charnock pitched on—evil day!—
Go Her way.
Though the argosies of Asia at Her doors
Heap their stores,
Though Her enterprise and energy secure
Income sure,
Though 'out-station orders punctually obeyed'
Swell Her trade—
Still, for rule, administration, and the rest,
Simla's best.

IN SPRING TIME

MY garden blazes brightly with the rose-bush and the peach,
And the koil sings above it, in the siris by the well,
From the creeper-covered trellis comes the squirrel's chattering speech,
And the blue jay screams and flutters where the cheery sat-bhai dwell.

But the rose has lost its fragrance, and the koil's note is strange;
I am sick of endless sunshine, sick of blossom-burdened bough.
Give me back the leafless woodlands where the winds of Spring time range—
Give me back one day in England, for it's Spring in England now!

Through the pines the gusts are booming, o'er the brown fields blowing chill,
From the furrow of the ploughshare streams the fragrance of the loam,
And the hawk nests on the cliff-side and the jackdaw in the hill,
And my heart is back in England 'mid the sights and sounds of Home.

But the garland of the sacrifice this wealth of rose and peach is,
Ah! koil, little koil, singing on the siris bough,
In my ears the knell of exile your ceaseless bell-like speech is—
Can you tell me aught of England or of Spring in England now?

GIFFEN'S DEBT

IMPRIMIS he was broke. Thereafter left
His regiment and, later, took to drink;
Then, having lost the balance of his friends,
'Went Fantee'—joined the people of the land,
Turned three parts Mussulman and one Hindu,
And lived among the Gauri villagers,
Who gave him shelter and a wife or twain,
And boasted that a thorough, full-blood sahib
Had come among them. Thus he spent his time,
Deeply indebted to the village shroff
(Who never asked for payment), always drunk,
Unclean, abominable, out-at-heels;
Forgetting that he was an Englishman.

You know they dammed the Gauri with a dam,
And all the good contractors scamped their work,
And all the bad material at hand
Was used to dam the Gauri—which was cheap,
And, therefore, proper. Then the Gauri burst,
And several hundred thousand cubic tons
Of water dropped into the valley, flop,
And drowned some five-and-twenty villagers,
And did a lakh or two of detriment
To crops and cattle. When the flood went down
We found him dead, beneath an old dead horse,
Full six miles down the valley. So we said
He was a victim to the Demon Drink,

And moralised upon him for a week,
And then forgot him. Which was natural.

But, in the valley of the Gauri, men
Beneath the shadow of the big new dam,
Relate a foolish legend of the flood,
Accounting for the little loss of life
(Only those five-and-twenty villagers)
In this wise:—On the evening of the flood
They heard the groaning of the rotten dam,
And voices of the Mountain Devils. Then
An incarnation of the local God,
Mounted upon a monster-neighing horse,
And flourishing a flail-like whip, came down,
Breathing ambrosia, to the villages,
And fell upon the simple villagers
With yells beyond the power of mortal throat,
And blows beyond the power of mortal hand,
And smote them with the flail-like whip, and drove
Them clamorous with terror up the hill,
And scattered, with the monster-neighing steed,
Their crazy cottages about their ears,
And generally cleared those villages.
Then came the water, and the local God,
Breathing ambrosia, flourishing his whip,
And mounted on his monster-neighing steed,
Went down the valley with the flying trees
And residue of homesteads, while they watched
Safe on the mountain-side these wondrous things,
And knew that they were much beloved of Heaven.

Wherefore, and when the dam was newly built,
They raised a temple to the local God,

And burnt all manner of unsavoury things
Upon his altar, and created priests,
And blew into a conch and banged a bell,
And told the story of the Gauri flood
With circumstance and much embroidery.

So he, the whiskified Objectionable,
Unclean, abominable, out-at-heels,
Became the tutelary Deity
Of all the Gauri villages;
And may in time become a Solar Myth!

TWO MONTHS

In June

NO hope, no change! The clouds have shut us in,
And through the cloud the sullen Sun strikes down
Full on the bosom of the tortured Town
Till Night falls heavy as remembered sin
That will not suffer sleep or thought of ease.
And, hour on hour, the dry-eyed Moon in spite
Glares through the haze and mocks with watery light
The torment of the uncomplaining trees.

Far off, the Thunder bellows her despair
To echoing Earth thrice-parched. The lightnings fly
In vain. No help the heaped-up clouds afford,
But wearier weight of burdened, burning air.
What truce with Dawn? Look, from the aching sky,
Day stalks, a tyrant with a flaming sword!

TWO MONTHS

In September

AT dawn there was a murmur in the trees,
A ripple on the tank, and in the air
Presage of coming coolness—everywhere
A voice of prophecy upon the breeze.
Up leapt the Sun and smote the dust to gold,
And strove to parch anew the heedless land,
All impotently, as a King grown old
Wars for the Empire crumbling 'neath his hand.

One after one, the lotos-petals fell,
Beneath the onslaught of the rebel year
In mutiny against a furious sky;
And far-off Winter whispered:—'It is well!
Hot Summer dies. Behold your help is near,
For when men's need is sorest, then come I.'

L'ENVOI

[To whom it may concern]

THE smoke upon your Altar dies,
The flowers decay.
The Goddess of your sacrifice
Has flown away.
What profit then to sing or slay
The sacrifice from day to day?

'We know the Shrine is void,' they said,
'The Goddess flown—
Yet wreaths are on the altar laid—
The Altar-Stone
Is black with fumes of sacrifice
Albeit She has fled our eyes.

'For, it may be, if still we sing
And tend the Shrine,
Some Deity on wandering wing
May there incline;
And, finding all in order meet,
Stay while we worship at Her feet.'

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

And Other Verses

PREFACE

THE greater part of the 'Barrack-Room Ballads,' as well as 'Cleared,' 'Evarra,' 'The Explanation,' 'The Conundrum,' 'Tomlinson,' and the 'English Flag,' have appeared in the 'National Observer.' Messrs. Macmillan and Co. have kindly given me permission to reproduce four ballads contributed to their Magazine, and I am indebted to the 'St. James's Gazette' for a like courtesy in regard to the ballads of the 'Clampherdown' and 'Bolivar,' and the 'Imperial Rescript.' 'The Rhyme of the Three Captains' was printed first in the 'Athenæum.' I fancy that most of the other verses are new.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

To

WOLCOTT BALESTIER

R. K.

BEYOND the path of the outmost sun through utter darkness hurled—
Farther than ever comet flared or vagrant star-dust swirled—
Live such as fought and sailed and ruled and loved and made our world.

They are purged of pride because they died, they know the worth of their bays,
They sit at wine with the Maidens Nine and the Gods of the Elder Days,
It is their will to serve or be still as fitteth our Father's praise.

'Tis theirs to sweep through the ringing deep where Azrael's outposts are,
Or buffet a path through the Pit's red wrath when God goes out to war,
Or hang with the reckless Seraphim on the rein of a red-maned star.

They take their mirth in the joy of the Earth—they dare not grieve for her pain—
They know of toil and the end of toil, they know God's law is plain,
So they whistle the Devil to make them sport who know that Sin is vain.

And ofttimes cometh our wise Lord God, master of every trade,
And tells them tales of His daily toil, of Edens newly made;
And they rise to their feet as He passes by, gentlemen unafraid.

To these who are cleansed of base Desire, Sorrow and Lust and Shame—
Gods for they knew the hearts of men, men for they stooped to Fame,
Borne on the breath that men call Death, my brother's spirit came.

He scarce had need to doff his pride or slough the dross of Earth—
E'en as he trod that day to God so walked he from his birth,
In simpleness and gentleness and honour and clean mirth.

So cup to lip in fellowship they gave him welcome high
And made him place at the banquet board—the Strong Men ranged thereby,
Who had done his work and held his peace and had no fear to die.

Beyond the loom of the last lone star, through open darkness hurled,
Farther than rebel comet dared or hiving star-swarm swirled,
Sits he with those that praise our God for that they served His world.

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

(1889–1891)

TO T. A.

I HAVE made for you a song,
And it may be right or wrong,
But only you can tell me if it's true;
I have tried for to explain
Both your pleasure and your pain,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you.

O there'll surely come a day
When they'll give you all your pay,
And treat you as a Christian ought to do;
So, until that day comes round,
Heaven keep you safe and sound,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you!

R. K.

DANNY DEEVER

'WHAT are the bugles blowin' for?' said Files-on-Parade.
'To turn you out, to turn you out,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'What makes you look so white, so white?' said Files-on-Parade.
'I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square—they're hangin' him to-day;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

'What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'What makes that front-rank man fall down?' says Files-on-Parade.
'A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun,' the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound—
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

"'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine,' said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's sleepin' out an' far to-night,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times,' said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone,' the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin'—you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

'What's that so black agin' the sun?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'What's that that whimpers over'ead?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It's Danny's soul that's passin' now,' the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they're done with Danny Deever, you can
'ear the quickstep play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin'
us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll
want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

TOMMY

I WENT into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, 'We serve no red-coats here.'
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I:
O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, go away';
But it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band begins to play,
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
O it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls!
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, wait outside';
But it's 'Special train for Atkins' when the trooper's on the tide,

The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,
O it's 'Special train for Atkins' when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.
Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?'
But it's 'Thin red line of 'eroes' when the drums begin to roll,
The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,
O it's 'Thin red line of 'eroes' when the drums begin to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;
While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, fall be'ind,'
But it's 'Please to walk in front, sir,' when there's trouble in the wind,
There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind,
O it's 'Please to walk in front, sir,' when there's trouble in the wind.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all:
We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.
Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face
The Widow's Uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Chuck him out, the brute!'
But it's 'Saviour of 'is country' when the guns begin to shoot;
An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool—you bet that Tommy sees!

'FUZZY-WUZZY'

(Soudan Expeditionary Force)

WE'VE fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.
We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:
'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Sua-kim,
An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.
So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certificate, an' if you want it signed
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.

We took our chanst among the Kyber 'ills,
The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,
The Burman give us Irriwaddy chills,
An' a Zulu impi dished us up in style:
But all we ever got from such as they
Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller;
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.

Then 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis
and the kid;
Our orders was to break you, an' of course we
went an' did.
We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't
'ardly fair;
But for all the odds agin' you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you
broke the square.

'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,
'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,
So we must certify the skill 'e's shown
In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords:
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
Will last an 'ealthy Tommy for a year.
So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends
which are no more,
If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp
you to deplore;
But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the
bargain fair,
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled
up the square!

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
An' 'e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.
'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb!
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree,
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn
For a Regiment o' British Infantree!

'FUZZY-WUZZY'

So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air—
You big black boundin' beggar—for you broke a British square!

SOLDIER, SOLDIER

'SOLDIER, soldier come from the wars,
W'y don't you march with my true love?'
'We're fresh from off the ship an' 'e's maybe give the slip,
An' you'd best go look for a new love.'

New love! True love!
Best go look for a new love,
The dead they cannot rise, an' you'd better dry your eyes,
An' you'd best go look for a new love.

'Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
What did you see o' my true love?'
'I seed 'im serve the Queen in a suit o' rifle-green,
An' you'd best go look for a new love.'

'Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
Did ye see no more o' my true love?'
'I seed 'im runnin' by when the shots begun to fly—
But you'd best go look for a new love.'

'Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
Did aught take 'arm to my true love?'
'I couldn't see the fight, for the smoke it lay so white—
An' you'd best go look for a new love.'

SOLDIER, SOLDIER

'Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
I'll up an' tend to my true love!'
''E's lying on the dead with a bullet through 'is 'ead,
An' you'd best go look for a new love.'

'Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
I'll down an' die with my true love!'
'The pit we dug 'll 'ide 'im an' the twenty men beside
'im—
And you'd best go look for a new love.'

'Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
Do you bring no sign from my true love?'
'I bring a lock of 'air that 'e allus used to wear,
An' you'd best go look for a new love.'

'Soldier, soldier come from the wars,
O then I know it's true I've lost my true love!'
'An' I tell you truth again—when you've lost the feel o'
pain
You'd best take me for your true love.'

True love! New love!
Best take 'im for a new love,
The dead they cannot rise, an' you'd better dry
your eyes,
An' you'd best take 'im for your true love.

SCREW-GUNS

SMOKIN' my pipe on the mountings, sniffin' the mornin' cool,
I walks in my old brown gaiters along o' my old brown mule,
With seventy gunners be'ind me, an' never a beggar forgets
It's only the pick of the Army that handles the dear little pets—'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns—the screw-guns they all love you!
So when we call round with a few guns, o' course you will know what to do—hoo! hoo!
Jest send in your Chief an' surrender—it's worse if you fights or you runs:
You can go where you please, you can skid up the trees, but you don't get away from the guns!

They sends us along where the roads are, but mostly we goes where they ain't:
We'd climb up the side of a sign-board an' trust to the stick o' the paint:
We've chivied the Naga an' Looshai, we've give the Afreedeeman fits,
For we fancies ourselves at two thousand, we guns that are built in two bits—'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns . . .

If a man doesn't work, why, we drills 'im an' teaches 'im
'ow to behave;
If a beggar can't march, why, we kills 'im an' rattles 'im
into 'is grave.
You've got to stand up to our business an' spring with-
out snatchin' or fuss.
D'you say that you sweat with the field-guns? By
God, you must lather with us—'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns . . .

The eagles is screamin' around us, the river's a-moanin'
below,
We're clear o' the pine an' the oak-scrub, we're out on
the rocks an' the snow,
An' the wind is as thin as a whip-lash what carries away
to the plains
The rattle an' stamp o' the lead-mules—the jinglety-
jink o' the chains—'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns . . .

There's a wheel on the Horns o' the Mornin', an' a wheel
on the edge o' the Pit,
An' a drop into nothin' beneath you as straight as a
beggar can spit:
With the sweat runnin' out o' your shirt-sleeves, an' the
sun off the snow in your face,
An' 'arf o' the men on the drag-ropes to hold the old
gun in 'er place—'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns . . .

Smokin' my pipe on the mountings, sniffin' the mornin'
cool,
I climbs in my old brown gaiters along o' my old brown
mule.

The monkey can say what our road was—the wild-goat 'e knows where we passed.
Stand easy, you long-eared old darlin's! Out drag-ropes! With shrapnel! Hold fast—'Tss! 'Tss!
For you all love the screw-guns—the screw-guns they all love you!
So when we take tea with a few guns, o' course you will know what to do—hoo! hoo!
Jest send in your Chief an' surrender—it's worse if you fights or you runs:
You may hide in the caves, they'll be only your graves, but you can't get away from the guns!

CELLS

I'VE a head like a concertina: I've a tongue like a button-stick:
I've a mouth like an old potato, and I'm more than a little sick,
But I've had my fun o' the Corp'ral's Guard: I've made the cinders fly,
And I'm here in the Clink for a thundering drink and blacking the Corporal's eye.

With a second-hand overcoat under my head,
And a beautiful view of the yard,
O it's pack-drill for me and a fortnight's C. B.
For 'drunk and resisting the Guard!'
Mad drunk and resisting the Guard—
'Strewth, but I socked it them hard!
So it's pack-drill for me and a fortnight's C. B.
For 'drunk and resisting the Guard.'

I started o' canteen porter, I finished o' canteen beer,
But a dose o' gin that a mate slipped in, it was that that brought me here.
'Twas that and an extry double Guard that rubbed my nose in the dirt;
But I fell away with the Corp'ral's stock and the best of the Corp'ral's shirt.

I left my cap in a public-house, my boots in the public road,
And Lord knows where, and I don't care, my belt and my tunic goed;
They'll stop my pay, they'll cut away the stripes I used to wear,
But I left my mark on the Corp'ral's face, and I think he'll keep it there!

My wife she cries on the barrack-gate, my kid in the barrack-yard,
It ain't that I mind the Ord'ly room—it's that that cuts so hard.
I'll take my oath before them both that I will sure abstain,
But as soon as I'm in with a mate and gin, I know I'll do it again!

With a second-hand overcoat under my head,
And a beautiful view of the yard,
Yes, it's pack-drill for me and a fortnight's C. B.
For 'drunk and resisting the Guard!'
Mad drunk and resisting the Guard—
'Strewth, but I socked it them hard!
So it's pack-drill for me and a fortnight's C. B.
For 'drunk and resisting the Guard.'

GUNGA DIN

YOU may talk o' gin and beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them blackfaced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din.
He was 'Din! Din! Din!
You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! slippery hitherao!
Water, get it! Panee lao![1]
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din.'

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a piece o' twisty rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,

[1] Bring water swiftly.

Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted 'Harry By!'[1]
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.
It was 'Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some juldee[2] in it
Or I'll marrow[3] you this minute
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!'

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done;
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is mussick[4] on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made 'Retire,'
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
It was 'Din! Din! Din!'
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could hear the front-files shout,
'Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!'

I sha'n't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight

[1] Mr. Atkins's equivalent for 'O brother.'
[2] Be quick. [3] Hit you. [4] Water-skin.

With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' he plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water-green:
It was crawlin' and it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.
It was 'Din! Din! Din!
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground,
An' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!'

'E carried me away
To where a dooli lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died,
'I 'ope you liked your drink,' sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
At the place where 'e is gone—
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din.

OONTS

(Northern India Transport Train)

WOT makes the soldier's 'eart to penk, wot makes 'im to perspire?
It isn't standin' up to charge nor lyin' down to fire;
But it's everlastin' waitin' on a everlastin' road
For the commissariat camel an' 'is commissariat load.
O the oont,[1] O the oont, O the commissariat oont!
With 'is silly neck a-bobbin' like a basket full o' snakes;
We packs 'im like an idol, an' you ought to 'ear 'im grunt,
An' when we gets 'im loaded up 'is blessed girth-rope breaks.

Wot makes the rear-guard swear so 'ard when night is drorin' in,
An' every native follower is shiverin' for 'is skin?
It ain't the chanst o' being rushed by Paythans from the 'ills,
It's the commissariat camel puttin' on 'is bloomin' frills!
O the oont, O the oont, O the hairy scary oont!

[1]Camel:—'oo' is pronounced like 'u' in 'bull,' but by Mr. Atkins to rhyme with 'front.'

A-trippin' over tent-ropes when we've got the night alarm!
We socks 'im with a stretcher-pole an' 'eads 'im off in front,
An' when we've saved 'is bloomin' life 'e chaws our bloomin' arm.

The 'orse 'e knows above a bit, the bullock's but a fool,
The elephant's a gentleman, the battery-mule's a mule;
But the commissariat cam-u-el, when all is said an' done,
'E's a devil an' a ostrich an' a orphan-child in one.
O the oont, O the oont, O the Gawd-forsaken oont!
The lumpy-'umpy 'ummin'-bird a-singin' where 'e lies,
'E's blocked the whole division from the rear-guard to the front,
An' when we get him up again—the beggar goes an' dies!

'E'll gall an' chafe an' lame an' fight—'e smells most awful vile;
'E'll lose 'isself for ever if you let 'im stray a mile;
'E's game to graze the 'ole day long an' 'owl the 'ole night through,
An' when 'e comes to greasy ground 'e splits 'isself in two.
O the oont, O the oont, O the floppin', droppin' oont!
When 'is long legs give from under an' 'is meltin' eye is dim,

The tribes is up be'ind us, and the tribes is out in front—
It ain't no jam for Tommy, but it's kites an' crows for 'im.

So when the cruel march is done, an' when the roads is blind,
An' when we sees the camp in front an' 'ears the shot be'ind,
Ho! then we strips 'is saddle off, and all 'is woes is past:
'E thinks on us that used 'im so, and gets revenge at last.

O the oont, O the oont, O the floatin', bloatin' oont!
The late lamented camel in the water-cut 'e lies;
We keeps a mile be'ind 'im an' we keeps a mile in front,
But 'e gets into the drinkin'-casks, and then o' course we dies.

LOOT

IF you've ever stole a pheasant-egg be'ind the keeper's back,
If you've ever snigged the washin' from the line,
If you've ever crammed a gander in your bloomin' 'aversack,
You will understand this little song o' mine.
But the service rules are 'ard, an' from such we are debarred,
For the same with English morals does not suit.
(Cornet: Toot! toot!)
W'y, they call a man a robber if 'e stuffs 'is marchin' clobber
With the—
(Chorus) Loo! loo! Lulu! lulu! Loo! loo! Loot! loot! loot!

Ow the loot!
Bloomin' loot!
That's the thing to make the boys git up an' shoot!
It's the same with dogs an' men,
If you'd make 'em come again
Clap 'em forward with a Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot!
(ff) Whoopee! Tear 'im, puppy! Loo! loo! Lulu!
Loot! loot! loot!

If you've knocked a nigger edgeways when 'e's thrustin' for your life,
You must leave 'im very careful where 'e fell;

An' may thank your stars an' gaiters if you didn't feel 'is knife
That you ain't told off to bury 'im as well.
Then the sweatin' Tommies wonder as they spade the beggars under
Why lootin' should be entered as a crime;
So if my song you'll 'ear, I will learn you plain an' clear
'Ow to pay yourself for fightin' overtime.
(Chorus) With the loot, . . .

Now remember when you're 'acking round a gilded Burma god
That 'is eyes is very often precious stones;
An' if you treat a nigger to a dose o' cleanin'-rod
'E's like to show you everything 'e owns.
When 'e won't prodooce no more, pour some water on the floor
Where you 'ear it answer 'ollow to the boot
(Cornet: Toot! toot!)—
When the ground begins to sink, shove your baynick down the chink,
An' you're sure to touch the—
(Chorus) Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!
Ow the loot! . . .

When from 'ouse to 'ouse you're 'unting, you must always work in pairs—
It 'alves the gain, but safer you will find—
For a single man gets bottled on them twisty-wisty stairs,
An' a woman comes and clobs 'im from be'ind.

LOOT

When you've turned 'em inside out, an' it seems beyond
a doubt
As if there weren't enough to dust a flute
(Cornet: Toot! toot!)—
Before you sling your 'ook, at the 'ousetops take a look,
For it's underneath the tiles they 'ide the loot.
(Chorus) Ow the loot! . . .

You can mostly square a Sergint an' a Quartermaster
too,
If you only take the proper way to go;
I could never keep my pickin's, but I've learned you all
I knew—
An' don't you never say I told you so.
An' now I'll bid good-bye, for I'm gettin' rather dry,
An' I see another tunin' up to toot
(Cornet: Toot! Toot!)—
So 'ere's good-luck to those that wears the Widow's
clo'es,
An' the Devil send 'em all they want o' loot!
(Chorus) Yes, the loot,
Bloomin' loot!
In the tunic an' the mess-tin an' the boot!
It's the same with dogs an' men,
If you'd make 'em come again
(fff) Whoop 'em forward with a Loo! loo! Lulu!
Loot! loot! loot!
Heeya! Sick 'im, puppy! Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot!
loot! loot!

'SNARLEYOW'

THIS 'appened in a battle to a batt'ry of the corps
Which is first among the women an' amazin' first in war;
An' what the bloomin' battle was I don't remember now,
But Two's off-lead 'e answered to the name o' Snarleyow.
Down in the Infantry, nobody cares;
Down in the Cavalry, Colonel 'e swears;
But down in the lead with the wheel at the flog
Turns the bold Bombardier to a little whipped dog!

They was movin' into action, they was needed very sore,
To learn a little schoolin' to a native army corps,
They 'ad nipped against an uphill, they was tuckin' down the brow,
When a tricky, trundlin' roundshot give the knock to Snarleyow.

They cut 'im loose an' left 'im—'e was almost tore in two—
But he tried to follow after as a well-trained 'orse should do;
'E went an' fouled the limber, an' the Driver's Brother squeals:
'Pull up, pull up for Snarleyow—'is head's between 'is 'eels!'

The Driver 'umped 'is shoulder, for the wheels was goin' round,
An' there ain't no 'Stop, conductor!' when a batt'ry's changin' ground;
Sez 'e: 'I broke the beggar in, an' very sad I feels,
But I couldn't pull up, not for you—your 'ead between your 'eels!'

'E 'adn't 'ardly spoke the word, before a droppin' shell
A little right the batt'ry an' between the sections fell;
An' when the smoke 'ad cleared away, before the limber wheels,
There lay the Driver's Brother with 'is 'ead between 'is 'eels.

Then sez the Driver's Brother, an' 'is words was very plain,
'For Gawd's own sake get over me, an' put me out o' pain.'
They saw 'is wounds was mortial, an' they judged that it was best,
So they took an' drove the limber straight across 'is back an' chest.

The Driver 'e give nothin' 'cept a little coughin' grunt,
But 'e swung 'is 'orses 'andsome when it came to 'Action Front!'
An' if one wheel was juicy, you may lay your Monday head
'Twas juicier for the niggers when the case begun to spread.

The moril of this story, it is plainly to be seen:
You 'aven't got no families when servin' of the Queen—
You 'aven't got no brothers, fathers, sisters, wives, or sons—
If you want to win your battles take an' work your bloomin' guns!

Down in the Infantry, nobody cares;
Down in the Cavalry, Colonel 'e swears;
But down in the lead with the wheel at the flog
Turns the bold Bombardier to a little whipped dog!

THE WIDOW AT WINDSOR

'AVE you 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor
With a hairy gold crown on 'er 'ead?
She 'as ships on the foam—she 'as millions at 'ome,
An' she pays us poor beggars in red.
(Ow, poor beggars in red!)
There's 'er nick on the cavalry 'orses,
There's 'er mark on the medical stores—
An' 'er troopers you'll find with a fair wind be'ind
That takes us to various wars.
(Poor beggars!—barbarious wars!)
Then 'ere's to the Widow at Windsor,
An' 'ere's to the stores an' the guns,
The men an' the 'orses what makes up the forces
O' Missis Victorier's sons.
(Poor beggars! Victorier's sons!)

Walk wide o' the Widow at Windsor,
For 'alf o' Creation she owns:
We 'ave bought 'er the same with the sword an' the flame,
An' we've salted it down with our bones.
(Poor beggars!—it's blue with our bones!)
Hands off o' the sons o' the Widow,
Hands off o' the goods in 'er shop,

For the Kings must come down an' the Emperors frown
When the Widow at Windsor says 'Stop!'
(Poor beggars!—we're sent to say 'Stop!')
Then 'ere's to the Lodge o' the Widow,
From the Pole to the Tropics it runs—
To the Lodge that we tile with the rank an' the file,
An' open in form with the guns.
(Poor beggars!—it's always they guns!)

We 'ave 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor,
It's safest to let 'er alone:
For 'er sentries we stand by the sea an' the land
Wherever the bugles are blown.
(Poor beggars!—an' don't we get blown!)
Take 'old o' the Wings o' the Mornin',
An' flop round the earth till you're dead;
But you won't get away from the tune that they play
To the bloomin' old rag over'ead.
(Poor beggars!—it's 'ot over'ead!)
Then 'ere's to the sons o' the Widow,
Wherever, 'owever they roam.
'Ere's all they desire, an' if they require,
A speedy return to their 'ome.
(Poor beggars!—they'll never see 'ome!)

BELTS

THERE was a row in Silver Street that's near to Dublin Quay,
Between an Irish regiment an' English cavalree;
It started at Revelly an' it lasted on till dark:
The first man dropped at Harrison's, the last forninst the Park.
For it was:—'Belts, belts, belts, an' that's one for you!'
An' it was 'Belts, belts, belts, an' that's done for you!'
O buckle an' tongue
Was the song that we sung
From Harrison's down to the Park!

There was a row in Silver Street—the regiments was out,
They called us 'Delhi Rebels,' an' we answered 'Threes about!'
That drew them like a hornet's nest—we met them good an' large,
The English at the double an' the Irish at the charge.
Then it was:—'Belts . . .'

There was a row in Silver Street—an' I was in it too;
We passed the time o' day, an' then the belts went 'whirraru!'

I misremember what occurred, but subsequint the storm
A 'Freeman's Journal Supplemint' was all my uniform.
O it was:—'Belts . . .'

There was a row in Silver Street—they sent the Polis there,
The English were too drunk to know, the Irish didn't care;
But when they grew impertinint we simultaneous rose,
Till half o' them was Liffey mud an' half was tatthered clo'es.
For it was:—'Belts . . .'

There was a row in Silver Street—it might ha' raged till now,
But some one drew his side-arm clear, an' nobody knew how;
'Twas Hogan took the point an' dropped; we saw the red blood run:
An' so we all was murderers that started out in fun.
While it was:—'Belts . . .'

There was a row in Silver Street—but that put down the shine,
Wid each man whisperin' to his next: ''Twas never work o' mine!'
We went away like beaten dogs, an' down the street we bore him,
The poor dumb corpse that couldn't tell the bhoys were sorry for him.
When it was:—'Belts . . .'

There was a row in Silver Street—it isn't over yet,
For half of us are under guard wid punishments to get;

BELTS

'Tis all a merricle to me as in the Clink I lie:
There was a row in Silver Street—begod, I wonder why!
But it was:—'Belts, belts, belts, an' that's one for you!'
An' it was 'Belts, belts, belts, an' that's done for you!'
O buckle an' tongue
Was the song that we sung
From Harrison's down to the Park!

THE YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER

WHEN the 'arf-made recruity goes out to the East
'E acts like a babe an' 'e drinks like a beast,
An' 'e wonders because 'e is frequent deceased
Ere 'e's fit for to serve as a soldier.
Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,
Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,
Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,
So-oldier of the Queen!

Now all you recruities what's drafted to-day,
You shut up your rag-box an' 'ark to my lay,
An' I'll sing you a soldier as far as I may:
A soldier what's fit for a soldier.
Fit, fit, fit for a soldier . . .

First mind you steer clear o' the grog-sellers' huts,
For they sell you Fixed Bay'nets that rots out your guts—
Ay, drink that 'ud eat the live steel from your butts—
An' it's bad for the young British soldier.
Bad, bad, bad for the soldier . . .

When the cholera comes—as it will past a doubt—
Keep out of the wet and don't go on the shout,

For the sickness gets in as the liquor dies out,
An' it crumples the young British soldier.
Crum-, crum-, crumples the soldier . . .

But the worst o' your foes is the sun over'ead:
You must wear your 'elmet for all that is said:
If 'e finds you uncovered 'e'll knock you down dead,
An' you'll die like a fool of a soldier.
Fool, fool, fool of a soldier . . .

If you're cast for fatigue by a sergeant unkind,
Don't grouse like a woman nor crack on nor blind;
Be handy and civil, and then you will find
That it's beer for the young British soldier.
Beer, beer, beer for the soldier . . .

Now, if you must marry, take care she is old—
A troop-sergeant's widow's the nicest I'm told,
For beauty won't help if your rations is cold,
Nor love ain't enough for a soldier.
'Nough, 'nough, 'nough for a soldier . . .

If the wife should go wrong with a comrade, be loth
To shoot when you catch 'em—you'll swing, on my oath!—
Make 'im take 'er and keep 'er: that's Hell for them both,
An' you're shut o' the curse of a soldier.
Curse, curse, curse of a soldier . . .

When first under fire an' you're wishful to duck,
Don't look nor take 'eed at the man that is struck,
Be thankful you're livin', and trust to your luck
And march to your front like a soldier.
Front, front, front like a soldier . . .

When 'arf of your bullets fly wide in the ditch,
Don't call your Martini a cross-eyed old bitch;
She's human as you are—you treat her as sich,
An' she'll fight for the young British soldier.
Fight, fight, fight for the soldier . . .

When shakin' their bustles like ladies so fine,
The guns o' the enemy wheel into line,
Shoot low at the limbers an' don't mind the shine,
For noise never startles the soldier.
Start-, start-, startles the soldier . . .

If your officer's dead and the sergeants look white,
Remember it's ruin to run from a fight:
So take open order, lie down, and sit tight,
And wait for supports like a soldier.
Wait, wait, wait like a soldier . . .

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,
And the women come out to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.
Go, go, go like a soldier,
Go, go, go like a soldier,
Go, go, go like a soldier,
So-oldier of the Queen!

MANDALAY

BY the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea,
There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me;
For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say:
'Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!'
Come you back to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay:
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay?
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

'Er petticoat was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,
An' 'er name was Supi-yaw-lat—jes' the same as Theebaw's Queen,
An' I seed her first a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot:
Bloomin' idol made o' mud—
Wot they called the Great Gawd Budd—
Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud!
On the road to Mandalay . . .

When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was
droppin' slow,
She'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing 'Kulla-lo-lo!'
With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er cheek agin my
chéek
We useter watch the steamers an' the hathis pilin' teak.
Elephints a-pilin' teak
In the sludgy, squdgy creek,
Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf
afraid to speak!
On the road to Mandalay . . .

But that's all shove be'ind me—long ago an' fur away,
An' there ain't no 'busses runnin' from the Bank to
Mandalay;
An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year sol-
dier tells:
'If you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed
naught else.'
No! you won't 'eed nothin' else
But them spicy garlic smells,
An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinkly
temple-bells;
On the road to Mandalay . . .

I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gritty pavin'-stones,
An' the blasted Henglish drizzle wakes the fever in my
bones;
Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaïds outer Chelsea to the
Strand,
An' they talks a lot o' lovin,' but wot do they under-
stand?

Beefy face an' grubby 'and—
Law! wot do they understand?
I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land!
On the road to Mandalay . . .

Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst;
For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be—
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, looking lazy at the sea;
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay,
With our sick beneath the awnings when we went to Mandalay!
O the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

TROOPIN'

(Our Army in the East)

TROOPIN', troopin', troopin' to the sea:
'Ere's September come again—the six-year men are free.
O leave the dead be'ind us, for they cannot come away
To where the ship's a-coalin' up that takes us 'ome to-day.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome,
Our ship is at the shore,
An' you must pack your 'aversack,
For we won't come back no more.
Ho, don't you grieve for me,
My lovely Mary-Ann,
For I'll marry you yit on a fourp'ny bit
As a time-expired man.

The Malabar's in 'arbour with the Jumner at 'er tail,
An' the time-expired's waitin' of 'is orders for to sail.
Ho! the weary waitin' when on Khyber 'ills we lay,
But the time-expired's waitin' of 'is orders 'ome to-day.

They'll turn us out at Portsmouth wharf in cold an' wet an' rain,
All wearin' Injian cotton kit, but we will not complain;

TROOPIN'

They'll kill us of pneumonia—for that's their little way—
But damn the chills and fever, men, we're goin' 'ome to-day!

Troopin', troopin', winter's round again!
See the new draf's pourin' in for the old campaign;
Ho, you poor recruities, but you've got to earn your pay—
What's the last from Lunnon, lads? We're goin' there to-day.

Troopin', troopin', give another cheer—
'Ere's to English women an' a quart of English beer.
The Colonel an' the regiment an' all who've got to stay,
Gawd's mercy strike 'em gentle—Whoop! we're goin' 'ome to-day.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome,
Our ship is at the shore,
An' you must pack your 'aversack,
For we won't come back no more.
Ho, don't you grieve for me,
My lovely Mary-Ann,
For I'll marry you yit on a fourp'ny bit
As a time-expired man.

THE WIDOW'S PARTY

'WHERE have you been this while away,
Johnnie, Johnnie?'
Out with the rest on a picnic lay,
Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!
They called us out of the barrack-yard
To Gawd knows where from Gosport Hard,
And you can't refuse when you get the card,
And the Widow gives the party.
(Bugle: Ta—rara—ra-ra-rara!)

'What did you get to eat and drink,
Johnnie, Johnnie?'
Standing water as thick as ink,
Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!
A bit o' beef that were three year stored,
A bit o' mutton as tough as a board,
And a fowl we killed with a sergeant's sword,
When the Widow give the party.

'What did you do for knives and forks,
Johnnie, Johnnie?'
We carries 'em with us wherever we walks,
Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!
And some was sliced and some was halved,
And some was crimped and some was carved,
And some was gutted and some was starved,
When the Widow give the party.

THE WIDOW'S PARTY

'What ha' you done with half your mess,
Johnnie, Johnnie?'
They couldn't do more and they wouldn't do less,
Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!
They ate their whack and they drank their fill,
And I think the rations has made them ill,
For half my comp'ny's lying still
Where the Widow give the party

'How did you get away—away,
Johnnie, Johnnie?'
On the broad o' my back at the end o' the day,
Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!
I comed away like a bleedin' toff,
For I got four niggers to carry me off,
As I lay in the bight of a canvas trough,
When the Widow give the party.

'What was the end of all the show,
Johnnie, Johnnie?'
Ask my Colonel, for I don't know,
Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!
We broke a King and we built a road—
A court-house stands where the reg'ment goed.
And the river's clean where the raw blood flowed
When the Widow give the party.
(Bugle: Ta—rara—ra-ra-rara!)

FORD O' KABUL RIVER

KABUL town's by Kabul river—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
There I lef' my mate for ever,
Wet an' drippin' by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
There's the river up and brimmin', an' there's 'arf a squadron swimmin'
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town's a blasted place—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Strewth I sha'n't forget 'is face
Wet an' drippin' by the ford!
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
Keep the crossing-stakes beside you, an' they will surely guide you
'Cross the ford of Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town is sun and dust—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
I'd ha' sooner drownded fust
'Stead of 'im beside the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

You can 'ear the 'orses threshin', you can 'ear the men a-splashin',
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town was ours to take—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
I'd ha' left it for 'is sake—
'Im that left me by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
It's none so bloomin' dry there; ain't you never comin' nigh there,
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark?

Kabul town'll go to hell—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Fore I see him 'live an' well—
'Im the best beside the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
Gawd 'elp 'em if they blunder, for their boots'll pull 'em under,
By the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Turn your 'orse from Kabul town—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Im an' 'arf my troop is down,
Down an' drownded by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
There's the river low an' fallin', but it ain't no use o' callin'
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

GENTLEMEN–RANKERS

TO the legion of the lost ones, to the cohort of the damned,
To my brethren in their sorrow overseas,
Sings a gentleman of England cleanly bred, machinely crammed,
And a trooper of the Empress, if you please.
Yea, a trooper of the forces who has run his own six horses,
And faith he went the pace and went it blind,
And the world was more than kin while he held the ready tin,
But to-day the Sergeant's something less than kind.
We're poor little lambs who've lost our way,
Baa! Baa! Baa!
We're little black sheep who've gone astray,
Baa—aa—aa!
Gentlemen-rankers out on the spree,
Damned from here to Eternity,
God ha' mercy on such as we,
Baa! Yah! Bah!

Oh, it's sweet to sweat through stables, sweet to empty kitchen slops,
And it's sweet to hear the tales the troopers tell,
To dance with blowzy housemaids at the regimental hops

And thrash the cad who says you waltz too well.
Yes, it makes you cock-a-hoop to be 'Rider' to your troop,
And branded with a blasted worsted spur,
When you envy, O how keenly, one poor Tommy being cleanly
Who blacks your boots and sometimes calls you 'Sir.'

If the home we never write to, and the oaths we never keep,
And all we know most distant and most dear,
Across the snoring barrack-room return to break our sleep,
Can you blame us if we soak ourselves in beer?
When the drunken comrade mutters and the great guard-lantern gutters
And the horror of our fall is written plain,
Every secret, self-revealing on the aching whitewashed ceiling,
Do you wonder that we drug ourselves from pain?

We have done with Hope and Honour, we are lost to Love and Truth,
We are dropping down the ladder rung by rung,
And the measure of our torment is the measure of our youth.
God help us, for we knew the worst too young!
Our shame is clean repentance for the crime that brought the sentence,
Our pride it is to know no spur of pride,
And the Curse of Reuben holds us till an alien turf enfolds us
And we die, and none can tell Them where we died.

We're poor little lambs who've lost our way,
Baa! Baa! Baa!
We're little black sheep who've gone astray,
Baa—aa—aa!
Gentlemen-rankers out on the spree,
Damned from here to Eternity,
God ha' mercy on such as we,
Baa! Yah! Bah!

ROUTE MARCHIN'

WE'RE marchin' on relief over Injia's sunny plains,
A little front o' Christmas-time an' just be'ind the Rains;
Ho! get away, you bullock-man, you've 'eard the bugle blowed,
There's a regiment a-comin' down the Grand Trunk Road;
With its best foot first
And the road a-sliding past,
An' every bloomin' campin'-ground exactly like the last;
While the Big Drum says,
With 'is 'rowdy-dowdy-dow!'—
'Kiko kissywarsti don't you hamsher argy jow?'[1]

Oh, there's them Injian temples to admire when you see,
There's the peacock round the corner an' the monkey up the tree,
An' there's that rummy silver grass a-wavin' in the wind,
An' the old Grand Trunk a-trailin' like a rifle-sling be'ind.
While it's best foot first, . . .

[1]Why don't you get on?

At half-past five's Revelly, an' our tents they down must come,
Like a lot of button mushrooms when you pick 'em up at 'ome.
But it's over in a minute, an' at six the column starts,
While the women and the kiddies sit an' shiver in the carts.
An' it's best foot first, . . .

Oh, then it's open order, an' we lights our pipes an' sings,
An' we talks about our rations an' a lot of other things,
An' we thinks o' friends in England, an' we wonders what they're at,
An' 'ow they would admire for to hear us sling the bat.[1]
An' it's best foot first, . . .

It's none so bad o' Sunday, when you're lyin' at your ease,
To watch the kites a-wheelin' round them feather-'eaded trees,
For although there ain't no women, yet there ain't no barrick-yards,
So the orficers goes shootin' an' the men they plays at cards.
Till it's best foot first, . . .

[1]Language. Thomas's first and firmest conviction is that he is a profound Orientalist and a fluent speaker of Hindustani. As a matter of fact, he depends largely on the sign-language.

So 'ark an' 'eed, you rookies, which is always grumblin' sore,
There's worser things than marchin' from Umballa to Cawnpore;
An' if your 'eels are blistered an' they feels to 'urt like 'ell,
You drop some tallow in your socks an' that will make 'em well.
For it's best foot first, . . .

We're marchin' on relief over Injia's coral strand,
Eight 'undred fightin' Englishmen, the Colonel, and the Band;
Ho! get away, you bullock-man, you've 'eard the bugle blowed,
There's a regiment a-comin' down the Grand Trunk Road;
With its best foot first
And the road a-sliding past,
An' every bloomin' campin'-ground exactly like the last;
While the Big Drum says,
With 'is 'rowdy-dowdy-dow!'—
'Kiko kissywarsti don't you hamsher argy jow?'

SHILLIN' A DAY

MY name is O'Kelly, I've heard the Revelly
From Birr to Bareilly, from Leeds to Lahore,
Hong-Kong and Peshawur,
Lucknow and Etawah,
And fifty-five more all endin' in 'pore.'
Black Death and his quickness, the depth and the thickness,
Of sorrow and sickness I've known on my way,
But I'm old and I'm nervis,
I'm cast from the Service,
And all I deserve is a shillin' a day.

(Chorus) Shillin' a day,
Bloomin' good pay—
Lucky to touch it, a shillin' a day!

Oh, it drives me half crazy to think of the days I
Went slap for the Ghazi, my sword at my side,
When we rode Hell-for-leather
Both squadrons together,
That didn't care whether we lived or we died.
But it's no use despairin', my wife must go charin'
An' me commissairin' the pay-bills to better,
So if me you be'old
In the wet and the cold,
By the Grand Metropold won't you give me a letter?

(Full chorus) Give 'im a letter—
'Can't do no better,
Late Troop-Sergeant-Major an'—runs
with a letter!
Think what 'e's been,
Think what 'e's seen,
Think of his pension an'—

Gawd save the Queen.

OTHER VERSES

THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

(1889)

OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border-side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.
Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
'Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?'
Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar:
'If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.

At dusk he harries the Abazai—at dawn he is into Bonair,
But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,
So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
By the favour of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai.
But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.
There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen.'
The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell and the head of the gallows-tree,
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat—
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
'Ye shoot like a soldier,' Kamal said. 'Show now if ye can ride.'

It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.
They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course—in a woful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand—small room was there to strive,
''Twas only by favour of mine,' quoth he, 'ye rode so long alive:
There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a row:
If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly.'

Lightly answered the Colonel's son: 'Do good to bird and beast,
But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.
They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain,
The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
But if thou thinkest the price be fair,—thy brethren wait to sup,
The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn,—howl, dog, and call them up!
And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!'
Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.
'No talk shall be of dogs,' said he, 'when wolf and gray wolf meet.
May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?'
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: 'I hold by the blood of my clan:
Take up the mare for my father's gift—by God, she has carried a man!'
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast;

'We be two strong men,' said Kamal then, 'but she loveth the younger best.
So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain.'
The Colonel's son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,
'Ye have taken the one from a foe,' said he; 'will ye take the mate from a friend?'
'A gift for a gift,' said Kamal straight; 'a limb for the risk of a limb.
Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!'
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest—
He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
'Now here is thy master,' Kamal said, 'who leads a troop of the Guides,
And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.
Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
Thy life is his—thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
So, thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line,
And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power—
Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur.'

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.
The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear—
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
'Ha' done! ha' done!' said the Colonel's son. 'Put up the steel at your sides!
Last night ye had struck at a Border thief—to-night 'tis a man of the Guides!'

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

THE LAST SUTTEE

(1889)

Not many years ago a King died in one of the Rajpoot States. His wives, disregarding the orders of the English against Suttee, would have broken out of the palace had not the gates been barred. But one of them, disguised as the King's favourite dancing-girl, passed through the line of guards and reached the pyre. There, her courage failing, she prayed her cousin, a baron of the court, to kill her. This he did, not knowing who she was.

UDAI CHAND lay sick to death
In his hold by Gungra hill.
All night we heard the death-gongs ring
For the soul of the dying Rajpoot King,
All night beat up from the women's wing
A cry that we could not still.

All night the barons came and went,
The lords of the outer guard:
All night the cressets glimmered pale
On Ulwar sabre and Tonk jezail,
Mewar headstall and Marwar mail,
That clinked in the palace yard.

In the Golden room on the palace roof
All night he fought for air:
And there was sobbing behind the screen,
Rustle and whisper of women unseen,
And the hungry eyes of the Boondi Queen
On the death she might not share.

He passed at dawn—the death-fire leaped
From ridge to river-head,
From the Malwa plains to the Abu scars:
And wail upon wail went up to the stars
Behind the grim zenana-bars,
When they knew that the King was dead.

The dumb priest knelt to tie his mouth
And robe him for the pyre.
The Boondi Queen beneath us cried:
'See, now, that we die as our mothers died
In the bridal-bed by our master's side!
Out, women!—to the fire!'

We drove the great gates home apace:
White hands were on the sill:
But ere the rush of the unseen feet
Had reached the turn to the open street,
The bars shot down, the guard-drum beat—
We held the dovecot still.

A face looked down in the gathering day,
And laughing spoke from the wall:
'Ohe, they mourn here: let me by—
Azizun, the Lucknow nautch-girl, I!
When the house is rotten, the rats must fly,
And I seek another thrall.

'For I ruled the King as ne'er did Queen,
To-night the Queens rule me!
Guard them safely, but let me go,
Or ever they pay the debt they owe
In scourge and torture!' She leaped below,
And the grim guard watched her flee.

They knew that the King had spent his soul
On a North-bred dancing-girl:
That he prayed to a flat-nosed Lucknow god,
And kissed the ground where her feet had trod,
And doomed to death at her drunken nod,
And swore by her lightest curl.

We bore the King to his fathers' place,
Where the tombs of the Sun-born stand:
Where the gray apes swing, and the peacocks preen
On fretted pillar and jewelled screen,
And the wild boar couch in the house of the Queen
On the drift of the desert sand.

The herald read his titles forth,
We set the logs aglow:
'Friend of the English, free from fear,
Baron of Luni to Jeysulmeer,
Lord of the Desert of Bikaneer,
King of the Jungle,—go!'

All night the red flame stabbed the sky
With wavering wind-tossed spears:
And out of a shattered temple crept
A woman who veiled her head and wept,
And called on the King—but the great King slept,
And turned not for her tears.

Small thought had he to mark the strife—
Cold fear with hot desire—
When thrice she leaped from the leaping flame,
And thrice she beat her breast for shame,
And thrice like a wounded dove she came
And moaned about the fire.

One watched, a bow-shot from the blaze,
The silent streets between,
Who had stood by the King in sport and fray,
To blade in ambush or boar at bay,
And he was a baron old and gray,
And kin to the Boondi Queen.

He said: 'O shameless, put aside
The veil upon thy brow!
Who held the King and all his land
To the wanton will of a harlot's hand!
Will the white ash rise from the blistered brand?
Stoop down, and call him now!'

Then she: 'By the faith of my tarnished soul,
All things I did not well,
I had hoped to clear ere the fire died,
And lay me down by my master's side
To rule in Heaven his only bride,
While the others howl in Hell.

'But I have felt the fire's breath,
And hard it is to die!
Yet if I may pray a Rajpoot lord
To sully the steel of a Thakur's sword
With base-born blood of a trade abhorred,'—
And the Thakur answered, 'Ay.'

He drew and struck: the straight blade drank
The life beneath the breast.
'I had looked for the Queen to face the flame,
But the harlot dies for the Rajpoot dame—
Sister of mine, pass, free from shame,
Pass with thy King to rest!'

The black log crashed above the white:
The little flames and lean,
Red as slaughter and blue as steel,
That whistled and fluttered from head to heel,
Leaped up anew, for they found their meal
On the heart of—the Boondi Queen!

THE BALLAD OF THE KING'S MERCY

(1889)

ABDHUR RAHMAN, the Durani Chief, of him is the story told.
His mercy fills the Khyber hills—his grace is manifold;
He has taken toll of the North and the South—his glory reacheth far,
And they tell the tale of his charity from Balkh to Kandahar.

Before the old Peshawur Gate, where Kurd and Kaffir meet,
The Governor of Kabul dealt the Justice of the Street,
And that was strait as running noose and swift as plunging knife,
Tho' he who held the longer purse might hold the longer life.
There was a hound of Hindustan had struck a Euzufzai,
Wherefore they spat upon his face and led him out to die.
It chanced the King went forth that hour when throat was bared to knife;
The Kaffir grovelled under-hoof and clamoured for his life.

Then said the King: 'Have hope, O friend! Yea, Death disgraced is hard;
Much honour shall be thine'; and called the Captain of the Guard,
Yar Khan, a bastard of the Blood, so city-babble saith,
And he was honoured of the King—the which is salt to Death;
And he was son of Daoud Shah, the Reiver of the Plains,
And blood of old Durani Lords ran fire in his veins;
And 'twas to tame an Afghan pride nor Hell nor Heaven could bind,
The King would make him butcher to a yelping cur of Hind.
'Strike!' said the King. 'King's blood art thou—his death shall be his pride!'
Then louder, that the crowd might catch: 'Fear not—his arms are tied!'
Yar Khan drew clear the Khyber knife, and struck, and sheathed again.
'O man, thy will is done,' quoth he; 'a King this dog hath slain.

Abdhur Rahman, the Durani Chief, to the North and the South is sold.
The North and the South shall open their mouth to a Ghilzai flag unrolled,
When the big guns speak to the Khyber peak, and his dog-Heratis fly:
Ye have heard the song—How long? How long? Wolves of the Abazai!

That night before the watch was set, when all the streets were clear,

The Governor of Kabul spoke: 'My King, hast thou no fear?
Thou knowest—thou hast heard,'—his speech died at his master's face.
And grimly said the Afghan King: 'I rule the Afghan race.
My path is mine—see thou to thine—to-night upon thy bed
Think who there be in Kabul now that clamour for thy head.'

That night when all the gates were shut to City and to throne,
Within a little garden house the King lay down alone.
Before the sinking of the moon, which is the Night of Night,
Yar Khan came softly to the King to make his honour white.
The children of the town had mocked beneath his horse's hoofs,
The harlots of the town had hailed him 'butcher!' from their roofs.
But as he groped against the wall, two hands upon him fell,
The King behind his shoulder spake: 'Dead man, thou dost not well!
'Tis ill to jest with Kings by day and seek a boon by night;
And that thou bearest in thy hand is all too sharp to write.
But three days hence, if God be good, and if thy strength remain,
Thou shalt demand one boon of me and bless me in thy pain.

For I am merciful to all, and most of all to thee.
My butcher of the shambles, rest—no knife hast thou for me!'

Abdhur Rahman, the Durani Chief, holds hard by the South and the North;
But the Ghilzai knows, ere the melting snows, when the swollen banks break forth,
When the red-coats crawl to the sungar wall, and his Usbeg lances fail:
Ye have heard the song—How long? How long? Wolves of the Zuka Kheyl!

They stoned him in the rubbish-field when dawn was in the sky,
According to the written word, 'See that he do not die.'
They stoned him till the stones were piled above him on the plain,
And those the labouring limbs displaced they tumbled back again.

One watched beside the dreary mound that veiled the battered thing.
And him the King with laughter called the Herald of the King.

It was upon the second night, the night of Ramazan,
The watcher leaning earthward heard the message of Yar Khan.
From shattered breast through shrivelled lips broke forth the rattling breath,
'Creature of God, deliver me from agony of Death.'

They sought the King among his girls, and risked their lives thereby:
'Protector of the Pitiful, give orders that he die!'

'Bid him endure until the day,' a lagging answer came;
'The night is short, and he can pray and learn to bless my name.'

Before the dawn three times he spoke, and on the day once more:
'Creature of God, deliver me, and bless the King therefor!'

They shot him at the morning prayer, to ease him of his pain,
And when he heard the matchlocks clink, he blessed the King again.

Which thing the singers made a song for all the world to sing,
So that the Outer Seas may know the mercy of the King.

Abdhur Rahman, the Durani Chief, of him is the story told,
He has opened his mouth to the North and the South, they have stuffed his mouth with gold.
Ye know the truth of his tender ruth—and sweet his favours are:
Ye have heard the song—How long? How long? from Balkh to Kandahar.

THE BALLAD OF THE KING'S JEST

(1890)

WHEN spring time flushes the desert grass,
Our kafilas wind through the Khyber Pass.
Lean are the camels but fat the frails,
Light are the purses but heavy the bales,
As the snowbound trade of the North comes down
To the market-square of Peshawur town.

In a turquoise twilight, crisp and chill,
A kafila camped at the foot of the hill.
Then blue smoke-haze of the cooking rose,
And tent-peg answered to hammer-nose;
And the picketed ponies, shag and wild,
Strained at their ropes as the feed was piled;
And the bubbling camels beside the load
Sprawled for a furlong adown the road;
And the Persian pussy-cats, brought for sale,
Spat at the dogs from the camel-bale;
And the tribesmen bellowed to hasten the food;
And the camp-fires twinkled by Fort Jumrood;
And there fled on the wings of the gathering dusk
A savour of camels and carpets and musk,
A murmur of voices, a reek of smoke,
To tell us the trade of the Khyber woke.

The lid of the flesh-pot chattered high,
The knives were whetted and—then came I

To Mahbub Ali the muleteer,
Patching his bridles and counting his gear,
Crammed with the gossip of half a year.
But Mahbub Ali the kindly said,
'Better is speech when the belly is fed.'
So we plunged the hand to the mid-wrist deep
In a cinnamon stew of the fat-tailed sheep,
And he who never hath tasted the food,
By Allah! he knoweth not bad from good.

We cleansed our beards of the mutton-grease,
We lay on the mats and were filled with peace,
And the talk slid north, and the talk slid south,
With the sliding puffs from the hookah-mouth.
Four things greater than all things are,—
Women and Horses and Power and War.
We spake of them all, but the last the most,
For I sought a word of a Russian post,
Of a shifty promise, an unsheathed sword
And a gray-coat guard on the Helmund ford
Then Mahbub Ali lowered his eyes
In the fashion of one who is weaving lies.
Quoth he: 'Of the Russians who can say?
When the night is gathering all is gray.
But we look that the gloom of the night shall die
In the morning flush of a blood-red sky.
Friend of my heart, is it meet or wise
To warn a King of his enemies?
We know what Heaven or Hell may bring,
But no man knoweth the mind of the King.
That unsought counsel is cursed of God
Attesteth the story of Wali Dad.

'His sire was leaky of tongue and pen,
His dam was a clucking Khuttuck hen;
And the colt bred close to the vice of each,
For he carried the curse of an unstanched speech.
Therewith madness—so that he sought
The favour of kings at the Kabul court;
And travelled, in hope of honour, far
To the line where the gray-coat squadrons are.
There have I journeyed too—but I
Saw naught, said naught, and—did not die!
He hearked to rumour, and snatched at a breath
Of "this one knoweth" and "that one saith,"—
Legends that ran from mouth to mouth
Of a gray-coat coming, and sack of the South.
These have I also heard—they pass
With each new spring and the winter grass.

'Hot-foot southward, forgotten of God,
Back to the city ran Wali Dad,
Even to Kabul—in full durbar
The King held talk with his Chief in War.
Into the press of the crowd he broke,
And what he had heard of the coming spoke.

'Then Gholam Hyder, the Red Chief, smiled,
As a mother might on a babbling child;
But those who would laugh restrained their breath,
When the face of the King showed dark as death.
Evil it is in full durbar
To cry to a ruler of gathering war!
Slowly he led to a peach-tree small,
That grew by a cleft of the city wall.

And he said to the boy: "They shall praise thy zeal
So long as the red spurt follows the steel.
And the Russ is upon us even now?
Great is thy prudence—await them, thou.
Watch from the tree. Thou art young and strong,
Surely thy vigil is not for long.
The Russ is upon us, thy clamour ran?
Surely an hour shall bring their van.
Wait and watch. When the host is near,
Shout aloud that my men may hear."

'Friend of my heart, is it meet or wise
To warn a King of his enemies?
A guard was set that he might not flee—
A score of bayonets ringed the tree.
The peach-bloom fell in showers of snow,
When he shook at his death as he looked below.
By the power of God, who alone is great,
Till the seventh day he fought with his fate.
Then madness took him, and men declare
He mowed in the branches as ape and bear,
And last as a sloth, ere his body failed,
And he hung as a bat in the forks, and wailed,
And sleep the cord of his hands untied,
And he fell, and was caught on the points and died.

'Heart of my heart, is it meet or wise
To warn a King of his enemies?
We know what Heaven or Hell may bring,
But no man knoweth the mind of the King.
Of the gray-coat coming who can say?
When the night is gathering all is gray.

Two things greater than all things are,
The first is Love, and the second War.
And since we know not how War may prove,
Heart of my heart, let us talk of Love!'

WITH SCINDIA TO DELHI

(1890)

More than a hundred years ago, in a great battle fought near Delhi, an Indian Prince rode fifty miles after the day was lost with a beggar-girl, who had loved him and followed him in all his camps, on his saddle-bow. He lost the girl when almost within sight of safety. A Maratta trooper tells the story:—

THE wreath of banquet overnight lay withered on the neck,
Our hands and scarves were saffron-dyed for signal of despair,
When we went forth to Paniput to battle with the Mlech,—
Ere we came back from Paniput and left a kingdom there.

Thrice thirty thousand men were we to force the Jumna fords—
The hawk-winged horse of Damajee, mailed squadrons of the Bhao,
Stark levies of the southern hills, the Deccan's sharpest swords,
And he the harlot's traitor son the goatherd Mulhar Rao?

Thrice thirty thousand men were we before the mists had cleared,
The low white mists of morning heard the war-conch scream and bray;
We called upon Bhowani and we gripped them by the beard,
We rolled upon them like a flood and washed their ranks away.

The children of the hills of Khost before our lances ran,
We drove the black Rohillas back as cattle to the pen;
'Twas then we needed Mulhar Rao to end what we began,
A thousand men had saved the charge; he fled the field with ten!

There was no room to clear a sword—no power to strike a blow,
For foot to foot, ay, breast to breast, the battle held us fast—
Save where the naked hill-men ran, and stabbing from below
Brought down the horse and rider and we trampled them and passed.

To left the roar of musketry rang like a falling flood—
To right the sunshine rippled red from redder lance and blade—
Above the dark Upsaras[1] flew, beneath us plashed the blood,
And, bellying black against the dust, the Bhagwa Jhanda swayed.

[1]The Choosers of the Slain.

I saw it fall in smoke and fire, the banner of the Bhao;
I heard a voice across the press of one who called in vain:—
'Ho! Anand Rao Nimbalkhur, ride! Get aid of Mulhar Rao!
Go shame his squadrons into fight—the Bhao—the Bhao is slain!'

Thereat, as when a sand-bar breaks in clotted spume and spray—
When rain of later autumn sweeps the Jumna waterhead,
Before their charge from flank to flank our riven ranks gave way;
But of the waters of that flood the Jumna fords ran red.

I held by Scindia, my lord, as close as man might hold;
A Soobah of the Deccan asks no aid to guard his life;
But Holkar's Horse were flying, and our chiefest chiefs were cold,
And like a flame among us leapt the long lean Northern knife.

I held by Scindia—my lance from butt to tuft was dyed,
The froth of battle bossed the shield and roped the bridle-chain—
What time beneath our horses' feet a maiden rose and cried,
And clung to Scindia, and I turned a sword-cut from the twain

(He set a spell upon the maid in woodlands long ago,
A hunter by the Tapti banks she gave him water there:
He turned her heart to water, and she followed to her woe.
What need had he of Lalun who had twenty maids as fair?)

Now in that hour strength left my lord; he wrenched his mare aside;
He bound the girl behind him and we slashed and struggled free.
Across the reeling wreck of strife we rode as shadows ride
From Paniput to Delhi town, but not alone were we.

'Twas Lutuf-Ullah Populzai laid horse upon our track,
A swine-fed reiver of the North that lusted for the maid;
I might have barred his path awhile, but Scindia called me back,
And I—O woe for Scindia!—I listened and obeyed.

League after league the formless scrub took shape and glided by—
League after league the white road swirled behind the white mare's feet—
League after league, when leagues were done, we heard the Populzai,
Where sure as Time and swift as Death the tireless footfall beat.

Noon's eye beheld that shame of flight, the shadows fell, we fled
Where steadfast as the wheeling kite he followed in our train;
The black wolf warred where we had warred, the jackal mocked our dead,
And terror born of twilight-tide made mad the labouring brain.

I gasped:—'A kingdom waits my lord; her love is but her own.
A day shall mar, a day shall cure for her, but what for thee?
Cut loose the girl: he follows fast. Cut loose and ride alone!'
Then Scindia 'twixt his blistered lips:—'My Queens' Queen shall she be!

'Of all who ate my bread last night 'twas she alone that came
To seek her love between the spears and find her crown therein!
One shame is mine to-day, what need the weight of double shame?
If once we reach the Delhi gate, though all be lost, I win!'

We rode—the white mare failed—her trot a staggering stumble grew,—
The cooking-smoke of even rose and weltered and hung low;
And still we heard the Populzai and still we strained anew,
And Delhi town was very near, but nearer was the foe.

Yea, Delhi town was very near when Lalun whispered:—
'Slay!
Lord of my life, the mare sinks fast—stab deep and
let me die!'
But Scindia would not, and the maid tore free and flung
away,
And turning as she fell we heard the clattering Popul-
zai.

Then Scindia checked the gasping mare that rocked and
groaned for breath,
And wheeled to charge and plunged the knife a hands-
breadth in her side—
The hunter and the hunted know how that last pause is
death—
The blood had chilled about her heart, she reared and
fell and died.

Our Gods were kind. Before he heard the maiden's
piteous scream
A log upon the Delhi road, beneath the mare he lay—
Lost mistress and lost battle passed before him like a
dream;
The darkness closed about his eyes—I bore my King
away.

THE BALLAD OF BOH DA THONE

(1888)

THIS is the ballad of Boh Da Thone,
Erst a Pretender to Theebaw's throne,
Who harried the district of Alalone:
How he met with his fate and the V. P. P.
At the hand of Harendra Mukerji,
Senior Gomashta, G. B. T.

Boh Da Thone was a warrior bold:
His sword and his Snider were bossed with gold.

And the Peacock Banner his henchmen bore
Was stiff with bullion, but stiffer with gore.

He shot at the strong and he slashed at the weak
From the Salween scrub to the Chindwin teak:

He crucified noble, he sacrificed mean,
He filled old ladies with kerosene:

While over the water the papers cried,
'The patriot fights for his countryside!'

But little they cared for the Native Press,
The worn white soldiers in Khaki dress,

Who tramped through the jungle and camped in the byre,
Who died in the swamp and were tombed in the mire,

Who gave up their lives, at the Queen's Command,
For the Pride of their Race and the Peace of the Land.

Now, first of the foemen of Boh Da Thone
Was Captain O'Neil of the 'Black Tyrone,'

And his was a Company, seventy strong,
Who hustled that dissolute Chief along.

There were lads from Galway and Louth and Meath
Who went to their death with a joke in their teeth,

And worshipped with fluency, fervour and zeal
The mud on the boot-heels of 'Crook' O'Neil.

But ever a blight on their labours lay,
And ever their quarry would vanish away,

Till the sun-dried boys of the Black Tyrone
Took a brotherly interest in Boh Da Thone:

And, sooth, if pursuit in possession ends,
The Boh and his trackers were best of friends.

The word of a scout—a march by night—
A rush through the mist—a scattering fight—

A volley from cover—a corpse in the clearing—
The glimpse of a loin-cloth and heavy jade ear-ring—

The flare of a village—the tally of slain—
And . . . the Boh was abroad 'on the raid' again!

They cursed their luck, as the Irish will,
They gave him credit for cunning and skill,

They buried their dead, they bolted their beef,
And started anew on the track of the thief

Till, in place of the 'Kalends of Greece,' men said,
'When Crook and his darlings come back with the head.'

They had hunted the Boh from the hills to the plain—
He doubled and broke for the hills again:

They had crippled his power for rapine and raid.
They had routed him out of his pet stockade,

And at last, they came, when the Day Star tired,
To a camp deserted—a village fired.

A black cross blistered the Morning-gold,
And the body upon it was stark and cold.

The wind of the dawn went merrily past,
The high grass bowed her plumes to the blast.

And out of the grass, on a sudden, broke
A spirtle of fire, a whorl of smoke—

And Captain O'Neil of the Black Tyrone
Was blessed with a slug in the ulnar-bone—
The gift of his enemy Boh Da Thone.

(Now a slug that is hammered from telegraph-wire
Is a thorn in the flesh and a rankling fire.)

. . . . . .

The shot-wound festered—as shot-wounds may
In a steaming barrack at Mandalay.

The left arm throbbed, and the Captain swore,
'I'd like to be after the Boh once more!'

The fever held him—the Captain said,
'I'd give a hundred to look at his head!'

The Hospital punkahs creaked and whirred,
But Babu Harendra (Gomashta) heard.

He thought of the cane-brake, green and dank,
That girdled his home by the Dacca tank.

He thought of his wife and his High School son,
He thought—but abandoned the thought—of a gun.

His sleep was broken by visions dread
Of a shining Boh with a silver head.

He kept his counsel and went his way,
And swindled the cartmen of half their pay.

. . . . . .

And the months went on, as the worst must do,
And the Boh returned to the raid anew.

But the Captain had quitted the long-drawn strife,
And in far Simoorie had taken a wife.

And she was a damsel of delicate mould,
With hair like the sunshine and heart of gold,

And little she knew the arms that embraced
Had cloven a man from the brow to the waist:

And little she knew that the loving lips
Had ordered a quivering life's eclipse,

And the eye that lit at her lightest breath
Had glared unawed in the Gates of Death.

(For these be matters a man would hide,
As a general rule, from an innocent Bride.)

And little the Captain thought of the past,
And, of all men, Babu Harendra last.

. . . . . .

But slow, in the sludge of the Kathun road,
The Government Bullock Train toted its load.

Speckless and spotless and shining with ghee,
In the rearmost cart sat the Babu-jee.

And ever a phantom before him fled
Of a scowling Boh with a silver head.

Then the lead-cart stuck, though the coolies slaved,
And the cartmen flogged and the escort raved;

And out of the jungle, with yells and squeals,
Pranced Boh Da Thone, and his gang at his heels:

Then belching blunderbuss answered back
The Snider's snarl and the carbine's crack,

And the blithe revolver began to sing
To the blade that twanged on the locking-ring,

And the brown flesh blued where the bay'net kissed,
As the steel shot back with a wrench and a twist,

And the great white bullocks with onyx eyes
Watched the souls of the dead arise,

And over the smoke of the fusillade
The Peacock Banner staggered and swayed.

Oh, gayest of scrimmages man may see
Is a well-worked rush on the G. B. T.!

The Babu shook at the horrible sight,
And girded his ponderous loins for flight,

But Fate had ordained that the Boh should start
On a lone-hand raid of the rearmost cart,

And out of that cart, with a bellow of woe,
The Babu fell—flat on the top of the Boh!

For years had Harendra served the State,
To the growth of his purse and the girth of his 'pet.'

There were twenty stone, as the tally-man knows,
On the broad of the chest of this best of Bohs.

And twenty stone from a height discharged
Are bad for a Boh with a spleen enlarged.

Oh, short was the struggle—severe was the shock—
He dropped like a bullock—he lay like a block;

And the Babu above him, convulsed with fear,
Heard the labouring life-breath hissed out in his ear.

And thus in a fashion undignified
The princely pest of the Chindwin died.

. . . . . .

Turn now to Simoorie where, lapped in his ease,
The Captain is petting the Bride on his knees,

Where the 'whit' of the bullet, the wounded man's scream
Are mixed as the mist of some devilish dream—

Forgotten, forgotten the sweat of the shambles
Where the hill-daisy blooms and the gray monkey gambols,

From the sword-belt set free and released from the steel,
The Peace of the Lord is with Captain O'Neil.

Up the hill to Simoorie—most patient of drudges—
The bags on his shoulder, the mail-runner trudges.

'For Captain O'Neil, Sahib. One hundred and ten
Rupees to collect on delivery.'

Then
(Their breakfast was stopped while the screw-jack and hammer
Tore waxcloth, split teak-wood, and chipped out the dammer),

Open-eyed, open-mouthed, on the napery's snow,
With a crash and a thud, rolled—the Head of the Boh!

And gummed to the scalp was a letter which ran:—

'In Fielding Force Service.
'Encampment,
'10th Jan.

'Dear Sir,—I have honour to send, as you said,
For final approval (see under) Boh's Head;

'Was took by myself in most bloody affair.
By High Education brought pressure to bear.

'Now violate Liberty, time being bad,
To mail V. P. P. (rupees hundred) Please add

'Whatever Your Honour can pass. Price of Blood
Much cheap at one hundred, and children want food;

'So trusting Your Honour will somewhat retain
True love and affection for Govt. Bullock Train,

'And show awful kindness to satisfy me,
'I am,
'Graceful Master,
'Your
'H. Mukerji.'

. . . . . .

As the rabbit is drawn to the rattlesnake's power,
As the smoker's eye fills at the opium hour,

As a horse reaches up to the manger above,
As the waiting ear yearns for the whisper of love,

From the arms of the Bride, iron-visaged and slow,
The Captain bent down to the Head of the Boh.

And e'en as he looked on the Thing where It lay
'Twixt the winking new spoons and the napkins' array,

The freed mind fled back to the long-ago days—
The hand-to-hand scuffle—the smoke and the blaze—

The forced march at night and the quick rush at dawn—
The banjo at twilight, the burial ere morn—

The stench of the marshes—the raw, piercing smell
When the overhand stabbing-cut silenced the yell—

The oaths of his Irish that surged when they stood
Where the black crosses hung o'er the Kuttamow flood.

As a derelict ship drifts away with the tide
The Captain went out on the Past from his Bride,

Back, back, through the springs to the chill of the year,
When he hunted the Boh from Maloon to Tsaleer.

As the shape of a corpse dimmers up through deep water,
In his eye lit the passionless passion of slaughter,

And men who had fought with O'Neil for the life
Had gazed on his face with less dread than his wife.

For she who had held him so long could not hold him—
Though a four-month Eternity should have controlled him—

But watched the twin Terror—the head turned to head—
The scowling, scarred Black, and the flushed savage Red—

The spirit that changed from her knowing and flew to
Some grim hidden Past she had never a clue to.

But It knew as It grinned, for he touched it unfearing,
And muttered aloud, 'So you kept that jade ear-ring!'

Then nodded, and kindly, as friend nods to friend,
'Old man, you fought well, but you lost in the end.'
. . . . . .
The visions departed, and Shame followed Passion:—
'He took what I said in this horrible fashion,

'I'll write to Harendra!' With language unsainted
The Captain came back to the Bride . . . who had fainted.
. . . . . .
And this is a fiction? No. Go to Simoorie
And look at their baby, a twelve-month old Houri,

A pert little, Irish-eyed Kathleen Mavournin—
She's always about on the Mall of a mornin'—

And you'll see, if her right shoulder-strap is displaced,
This: Gules upon argent, a Boh's Head, erased!

THE LAMENT OF THE BORDER CATTLE THIEF

(1888)

O WOE is me for the merry life
I led beyond the Bar,
And a treble woe for my winsome wife
That weeps at Shalimar.

They have taken away my long jezail,
My shield and sabre fine,
And heaved me into the Central Jail
For lifting of the kine.

The steer may low within the byre,
The Jut may tend his grain,
But there'll be neither loot nor fire
Till I come back again.

And God have mercy on the Jut
When once my fetters fall,
And Heaven defend the farmer's hut
When I am loosed from thrall.

It's woe to bend the stubborn back
Above the grinching quern,
It's woe to hear the leg-bar clack
And jingle when I turn!

But for the sorrow and the shame,
The brand on me and mine,
I'll pay you back in leaping flame
And loss of the butchered kine.

For every cow I spared before
In charity set free,
If I may reach my hold once more
I'll reive an honest three.

For every time I raised the lowe
That scared the dusty plain,
By sword and cord, by torch and tow,
I'll light the land with twain!

Ride hard, ride hard to Abazai,
Young Sahib with the yellow hair—
Lie close, lie close as khuttucks lie,
Fat herds below Bonair.

The one I'll shoot at twilight-tide,
At dawn I'll drive the other;
The black shall mourn for hoof and hide,
The white man for his brother.

'Tis war, red war, I'll give you then,
War till my sinews fail;
For the wrong you have done to a chief of men,
And a thief of the Zukka Kheyl.

And if I fall to your hand afresh
I give you leave for the sin,
That you cram my throat with the foul pig's flesh,
And swing me in the skin!

THE RHYME OF THE THREE CAPTAINS

(1890)

This ballad appears to refer to one of the exploits of the notorious Paul Jones, the American pirate. It is founded on fact.

AT the close of a winter day,
Their anchors down, by London town, the Three Great Captains lay;
And one was Admiral of the North from Solway Firth to Skye,
And one was Lord of the Wessex coast and all the lands thereby,
And one was Master of the Thames from Limehouse to Blackwall,
And he was Captain of the Fleet—the bravest of them all.
Their good guns guarded the great gray sides that were thirty foot in the sheer,
When there came a certain trading brig with news of a privateer.
Her rigging was rough with the clotted drift that drives in a Northern breeze,
Her sides were clogged with the lazy weed that spawns in the Eastern seas.
Light she rode in the rude tide-rip, to left and right she rolled,

And the skipper sat on the scuttle-butt and stared at an empty hold.
'I ha' paid Port dues for your Law,' quoth he, 'and where is the Law ye boast
If I sail unscathed from a heathen port to be robbed on a Christian coast?
Ye have smoked the hives of the Laccadives as we burn the lice in a bunk,
We tack not now to a Gallang prow or a plunging Pei-ho junk;
I had no fear but the seas were clear as far as a sail might fare
Till I met with a lime-washed Yankee brig that rode off Finisterre.
There were canvas blinds to his bow-gun ports to screen the weight he bore,
And the signals ran for a merchantman from Sandy Hook to the Nore.
He would not fly the Rovers' flag—the bloody or the black,
But now he floated the Gridiron and now he flaunted the Jack.
He spoke of the Law as he crimped my crew—he swore it was only a loan;
But when I would ask for my own again, he swore it was none of my own.
He has taken my little parrakeets that nest beneath the Line,
He has stripped my rails of the shaddock-frails and the green unripened pine;
He has taken my bale of dammer and spice I won beyond the seas,
He has taken my grinning heathen gods—and what should he want o' these?

My foremast would not mend his boom, my deck-house patch his boats;
He has whittled the two, this Yank Yahoo, to peddle for shoe-peg oats.
I could not fight for the failing light and a rough beam-sea beside,
But I hulled him once for a clumsy crimp and twice because he lied.
Had I had guns (as I had goods) to work my Christian harm,
I had run him up from his quarter-deck to trade with his own yard-arm;
I had nailed his ears to my capstan-head, and ripped them off with a saw,
And soused them in the bilgewater, and served them to him raw;
I had flung him blind in a rudderless boat to rot in the rocking dark,
I had towed him aft of his own craft, a bait for his brother shark;
I had lapped him round with cocoa husk, and drenched him with the oil,
And lashed him fast to his own mast to blaze above my spoil;
I had stripped his hide for my hammock-side, and tasselled his beard i' the mesh,
And spitted his crew on the live bamboo that grows through the gangrened flesh;
I had hove him down by the mangroves brown, where the mud-reef sucks and draws,
Moored by the heel to his own keel to wait for the land-crab's claws!
He is lazar within and lime without, ye can nose him far enow,

For he carries the taint of a musky ship—the reek of the slaver's dhow!'
The skipper looked at the tiering guns and the bulwarks tall and cold,
And the Captains Three full courteously peered down at the gutted hold,
And the Captains Three called courteously from deck to scuttle-butt:—
'Good Sir, we ha' dealt with that merchantman or ever your teeth were cut.
Your words be words of a lawless race, and the Law it standeth thus:
He comes of a race that have never a Law, and he never has boarded us.
We ha' sold him canvas and rope and spar—we know that his price is fair,
And we know that he weeps for the lack of a Law as he rides off Finisterre.
And since he is damned for a gallows-thief by you and better than you,
We hold it meet that the English fleet should know that we hold him true.'
The skipper called to the tall taffrail:—'And what is that to me?
Did ever you hear of a Yankee brig that rifled a Seventy-three?
Do I loom so large from your quarter-deck that I lift like a ship o' the Line?
He has learned to run from a shotted gun and harry such craft as mine.
There is never a Law on the Cocos Keys to hold a white man in,

But we do not steal the niggers' meal, for that is a nigger's sin.
Must he have his Law as a quid to chaw, or laid in brass on his wheel?
Does he steal with tears when he buccaneers? 'Fore Gad, then, why does he steal?'
The skipper bit on a deep-sea word, and the word it was not sweet,
For he could see the Captains Three had signalled to the Fleet.
But three and two, in white and blue, the whimpering flags began:—
'We have heard a tale of a—foreign sail, but he is a merchantman.'
The skipper peered beneath his palm and swore by the Great Horn Spoon:—
''Fore Gad, the Chaplain of the Fleet would bless my picaroon!'
By two and three the flags blew free to lash the laughing air:—
'We have sold our spars to the merchantman—we know that his price is fair.'
The skipper winked his Western eye, and swore by a China storm:—
'They ha' rigged him a Joseph's jury-coat to keep his honour warm.'
The halliards twanged against the tops, the bunting bellied broad,
The skipper spat in the empty hold and mourned for a wasted cord.
Masthead—masthead, the signal sped by the line o' the British craft:

The skipper called to his Lascar crew, and put her about and laughed:—
'It's mainsail haul, my bully boys all—we'll out to the seas again—
Ere they set us to paint their pirate saint, or scrub at his grapnel-chain.
It's fore-sheet free, with her head to the sea, and the swing of the unbought brine—
We'll make no sport in an English court till we come as a ship o' the Line:
Till we come as a ship o' the Line, my lads, of thirty foot in the sheer,
Lifting again from the outer main with news of a privateer;
Flying his pluck at our mizzen-truck for weft of Admiralty,
Heaving his head for our dipsy-lead in sign that we keep the sea.
Then fore-sheet home as she lifts to the foam—we stand on the outward tack,
We are paid in the coin of the white man's trade—the bezant is hard, ay, and black.
The frigate-bird shall carry my word to the Kling and the Orang-Laut
How a man may sail from a heathen coast to be robbed in a Christian port;
How a man may be robbed in Christian port while Three Great Captains there
Shall dip their flag to a slaver's rag—to show that his trade is fair!'

THE BALLAD OF THE 'CLAMPHERDOWN'

(1891)

IT was our war-ship 'Clampherdown'
Would sweep the Channel clean.
Wherefore she kept her hatches close
When the merry Channel chops arose,
To save the bleached marine.

She had one bow-gun of a hundred ton,
And a great stern-gun beside;
They dipped their noses deep in the sea,
They racked their stays and stanchions free
In the wash of the wind-whipped tide.

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown'
Fell in with a cruiser light
That carried the dainty Hotchkiss gun
And a pair o' heels wherewith to run
From the grip of a close-fought fight.

She opened fire at seven miles—
As ye shoot at a bobbing cork—
And once she fired and twice she fired,
Till the bow-gun drooped like a lily tired
That lolls upon the stalk.

'Captain, the bow-gun melts apace,
The deck-beams break below,
'Twere well to rest for an hour or twain,
And botch the shattered plates again.'
And he answered, 'Make it so.'

She opened fire within the mile—
As ye shoot at the flying duck—
And the great stern-gun shot fair and true,
With the heave of the ship, to the stainless blue,
And the great stern-turret stuck.

'Captain, the turret fills with steam,
The feed-pipes burst below—
You can hear the hiss of the helpless ram,
You can hear the twisted runners jam.'
And he answered, 'Turn and go!'

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown,'
And grimly did she roll;
Swung round to take the cruiser's fire
As the White Whale faces the Thresher's ire
When they war by the frozen Pole.

'Captain, the shells are falling fast,
And faster still fall we;
And it is not meet for English stock
To bide in the heart of an eight-day clock
The death they cannot see.'

'Lie down, lie down, my bold A. B.,
We drift upon her beam;

We dare not ram, for she can run;
And dare ye fire another gun,
And die in the peeling steam?'

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown'
That carried an armour-belt;
But fifty feet at stern and bow
Lay bare as the paunch of the purser's sow,
To the hail of the Nordenfeldt.

'Captain, they hack us through and through;
The chilled steel bolts are swift!
We have emptied the bunkers in open sea,
Their shrapnel bursts where our coal should be.'
And he answered, 'Let her drift.'

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown,'
Swung round upon the tide,
Her two dumb guns glared south and north,
And the blood and the bubbling steam ran forth,
And she ground the cruiser's side.

'Captain, they cry, the fight is done,
They bid you send your sword.'
And he answered, 'Grapple her stern and bow.
They have asked for the steel. They shall have it now;
Out cutlasses and board!'

It was our war-ship 'Clampherdown,'
Spewed up four hundred men;
And the scalded stokers yelped delight,
As they rolled in the waist and heard the fight,
Stamp o'er their steel-walled pen.

THE BALLAD OF THE 'CLAMPHERDOWN'

They cleared the cruiser end to end,
From conning-tower to hold.
They fought as they fought in Nelson's fleet;
They were stripped to the waist, they were
bare to the feet,
As it was in the days of old.

It was the sinking 'Clampherdown'
Heaved up her battered side—
And carried a million pounds in steel,
To the cod and the corpse-fed conger-eel,
And the scour of the Channel tide.

It was the crew of the 'Clampherdown'
Stood out to sweep the sea,
On a cruiser won from an ancient foe,
As it was in the days of long ago,
And as it still shall be.

THE BALLAD OF THE 'BOLIVAR'

(1890)

SEVEN men from all the world back to Docks again,
Rolling down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising Cain:
Give the girls another drink 'fore we sign away—
We that took the 'Bolivar' out across the Bay!

We put out from Sunderland loaded down with rails;
We put back to Sunderland 'cause our cargo shifted;
We put out from Sunderland—met the winter gales—
Seven days and seven nights to the Start we drifted.

Racketing her rivets loose, smoke-stack white as snow,
All the coals adrift adeck, half the rails below,
Leaking like a lobster-pot, steering like a dray—
Out we took the 'Bolivar,' out across the Bay!

One by one the Lights came up, winked and let us by;
Mile by mile we waddled on, coal and fo'c'sle short;
Met a blow that laid us down, heard a bulk-head fly;
Left the 'Wolf' behind us with a two-foot list to port.

Trailing like a wounded duck, working out her soul;
Clanging like a smithy-shop after every roll;
Just a funnel and a mast lurching through the spray—
So we threshed the 'Bolivar' out across the Bay!

Felt her hog and felt her sag, betted when she'd break;
Wondered every time she raced if she'd stand the shock;
Heard the seas like drunken men pounding at her strake;
Hoped the Lord 'ud keep his thumb on the plummer-block.

Banged against the iron decks, bilges choked with coal;
Flayed and frozen foot and hand, sick of heart and soul;
Last we prayed she'd buck herself into Judgment Day—
Hi! we cursed the 'Bolivar' knocking round the Bay!

O her nose flung up to sky, groaning to be still—
Up and down and back we went, never time for breath;
Then the money paid at Lloyd's caught her by the heel,
And the stars ran round and round dancin' at our death.

Aching for an hour's sleep, dozing off between;
Heard the rotten rivets draw when she took it green;
Watched the compass chase its tail like a cat at play—
That was on the 'Bolivar,' south across the Bay.

Once we saw between the squalls, lyin' head to swell—
Mad with work and weariness, wishin' they was we—
Some damned Liner's lights go by like a grand hotel;
Cheered her from the 'Bolivar' swampin' in the sea.

Then a grayback cleared us out, then the skipper laughed;
'Boys, the wheel has gone to Hell—rig the winches aft!
Yoke the kicking rudder-head—get her under way!'
So we steered her, pully-haul, out across the Bay!

Just a pack o' rotten plates puttied up with tar,
In we came, an' time enough, 'cross Bilbao Bar.
Overloaded, undermanned, meant to founder, we
Euchred God Almighty's storm, bluffed the Eternal Sea!

Seven men from all the world, back to town again,
Rollin' down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising Cain:
Seven men from out of Hell. Ain't the owners gay,
'Cause we took the 'Bolivar' safe across the Bay?

THE SACRIFICE OF ER-HEB

(1887)

ER-HEB beyond the Hills of Ao-Safai
Bears witness to the truth, and Ao-Safai
Hath told the men of Gorukh. Thence the tale
Comes westward o'er the peaks to India.

The story of Bisesa, Armod's child,—
A maiden plighted to the Chief in War,
The Man of Sixty Spears, who held the Pass
That leads to Thibet, but to-day is gone
To seek his comfort of the God called Budh
The Silent—showing how the Sickness ceased
Because of her who died to save the tribe.

Taman is One and greater than us all,
Taman is One and greater than all Gods:
Taman is Two in One and rides the sky,
Curved like a stallion's croup, from dusk to dawn,
And drums upon it with his heels, whereby
Is bred the neighing thunder in the hills.

This is Taman, the God of all Er-Heb,
Who was before all Gods, and made all Gods,
And presently will break the Gods he made,
And step upon the Earth to govern men

Who give him milk-dry ewes and cheat his Priests,
Or leave his shrine unlighted—as Er-Heb
Left it unlighted and forgot Taman,
When all the Valley followed after Kysh
And Yabosh, little Gods but very wise,
And from the sky Taman beheld their sin.

He sent the Sickness out upon the hills,
The Red Horse Sickness with the iron hooves,
To turn the Valley to Taman again.

And the Red Horse snuffed thrice into the wind,
The naked wind that had no fear of him;
And the Red Horse stamped thrice upon the snow,
The naked snow that had no fear of him;
And the Red Horse went out across the rocks,
The ringing rocks that had no fear of him;
And downward, where the lean birch meets the snow,
And downward, where the gray pine meets the birch,
And downward, where the dwarf oak meets the pine,
Till at his feet our cup-like pastures lay.

That night, the slow mists of the evening dropped,
Dropped as a cloth upon a dead man's face,
And weltered in the valley, bluish-white
Like water very silent—spread abroad,
Like water very silent, from the Shrine
Unlighted of Taman to where the stream
Is dammed to fill our cattle-troughs—sent up
White waves that rocked and heaved and then were still,
Till all the Valley glittered like a marsh,
Beneath the moonlight, filled with sluggish mist
Knee-deep, so that men waded as they walked.

That night, the Red Horse grazed above the Dam,
Beyond the cattle-troughs. Men heard him feed,
And those that heard him sickened where they lay.
Thus came the sickness to Er-Heb, and slew
Ten men, strong men, and of the women four;
And the Red Horse went hillward with the dawn,
But near the cattle-troughs his hoof-prints lay.

That night, the slow mists of the evening dropped,
Dropped as a cloth upon the dead, but rose
A little higher, to a young girl's height;
Till all the valley glittered like a lake,
Beneath the moonlight, filled with sluggish mist.

That night, the Red Horse grazed beyond the Dam
A stone's-throw from the troughs. Men heard him feed,
And those that heard him sickened where they lay.
Thus came the sickness to Er-Heb, and slew
Of men a score, and of the women eight,
And of the children two.

Because the road
To Gorukh was a road of enemies,
And Ao-Safai was blocked with early snow,
We could not flee from out the Valley. Death
Smote at us in a slaughter-pen, and Kysh
Was mute as Yabosh, though the goats were slain;
And the Red Horse grazed nightly by the stream,
And later, outward, towards the Unlighted Shrine,
And those that heard him sickened where they lay.

Then said Bisesa to the Priests at dusk,
When the white mist rose up breast-high, and choked

The voices in the houses of the dead:—
'Yabosh and Kysh avail not. If the Horse
Reach the Unlighted Shrine we surely die.
Ye have forgotten of all Gods the chief,
Taman!' Here rolled the thunder through the Hill.
And Yabosh shook upon his pedestal.
'Ye have forgotten of all Gods the chief
Too long.' And all were dumb save one, who cried
On Yabosh with the Sapphire 'twixt His knees,
But found no answer in the smoky roof,
And, being smitten of the sickness, died
Before the altar of the Sapphire Shrine.

Then said Bisesa:—'I am near to Death,
And have the Wisdom of the Grave for gift
To bear me on the path my feet must tread.
If there be wealth on earth, then I am rich,
For Armod is the first of all Er-Heb;
If there be beauty on the earth,'—her eyes
Dropped for a moment to the temple floor,—
'Ye know that I am fair. If there be Love,
Ye know that love is mine.' The Chief in War,
The Man of Sixty Spears, broke from the press,
And would have clasped her, but the Priests withstood,
Saying:—'She has a message from Taman.'
Then said Bisesa:—'By my wealth and love
And beauty, I am chosen of the God
Taman.' Here rolled the thunder through the Hills
And Kysh fell forward on the Mound of Skulls.

In darkness, and before our Priests, the maid
Between the altars cast her bracelets down,
Therewith the heavy ear-rings Armod made,

When he was young, out of the water-gold
Of Gorukh—threw the breast-plate thick with jade
Upon the turquoise anklets—put aside
The bands of silver on her brow and neck;
And as the trinkets tinkled on the stones,
The thunder of Taman lowed like a bull.

Then said Bisesa, stretching out her hands,
As one in darkness fearing Devils:—'Help!
O priests, I am a woman very weak.
And who am I to know the will of Gods?
Taman hath called me—whither shall I go?'
The Chief in War, the Man of Sixty Spears,
Howled in his torment, fettered by the Priests,
But dared not come to her to drag her forth,
And dared not lift his spear against the Priests.
Then all men wept.

There was a Priest of Kysh
Bent with a hundred winters, hairless, blind,
And taloned as the great Snow-Eagle is.
His seat was nearest to the altar-fires,
And he was counted dumb among the Priests.
But, whether Kysh decreed, or from Taman
The impotent tongue found utterance we know
As little as the bats beneath the eaves.
He cried so that they heard who stood without:—
'To the Unlighted Shrine!' and crept aside
Into the shadow of his fallen God
And whimpered, and Bisesa went her way.

That night, the slow mists of the evening dropped,
Dropped as a cloth upon the dead, and rose

Above the roofs, and by the Unlighted Shrine
Lay as the slimy water of the troughs
When murrain thins the cattle of Er-Heb:
And through the mist men heard the Red Horse feed.

In Armod's house they burned Bisesa's dower,
And killed her black bull Tor, and broke her wheel,
And loosed her hair, as for the marriage-feast,
With cries more loud than mourning for the dead.

Across the fields, from Armod's dwelling-place,
We heard Bisesa weeping where she passed
To seek the Unlighted Shrine; the Red Horse neighed
And followed her, and on the river-mint
His hooves struck dead and heavy in our ears.

Out of the mists of evening, as the star
Of Ao-Safai climbs through the black snow-blur
To show the Pass is clear, Bisesa stepped
Upon the great gray slope of mortised stone,
The Causeway of Taman. The Red Horse neighed
Behind her to the Unlighted Shrine—then fled
North to the Mountain where his stable lies.
They know who dared the anger of Taman,
And watched that night above the clinging mists,
Far up the hill, Bisesa's passing in.

She set her hand upon the carven door,
Fouled by a myriad bats, and black with time,
Whereon is graved the Glory of Taman
In letters older than the Ao-Safai;
And twice she turned aside and twice she wept,
Cast down upon the threshold, clamouring

For him she loved—the Man of Sixty Spears,
And for her father,—and the black bull Tor,
Hers and her pride. Yea, twice she turned away
Before the awful darkness of the door,
And the great horror of the Wall of Man
Where man is made the plaything of Taman,
An Eyeless Face that waits above and laughs.

But the third time she cried and put her palms
Against the hewn stone leaves, and prayed Taman
To spare Er-Heb and take her life for price.

They know who watched, the doors were rent apart
And closed upon Bisesa, and the rain
Broke like a flood across the Valley, washed
The mist away; but louder than the rain
The thunder of Taman filled men with fear.

Some say that from the Unlighted Shrine she cried
For succour, very pitifully, thrice,
And others that she sang and had no fear.
And some that there was neither song nor cry,
But only thunder and the lashing rain.

Howbeit, in the morning men rose up,
Perplexed with horror, crowding to the Shrine.
And when Er-Heb was gathered at the doors
The Priests made lamentation and passed in
To a strange Temple and a God they feared
But knew not.

From the crevices the grass
Had thrust the altar-slabs apart, the walls
Were gray with stains unclean, the roof-beams swelled

With many-coloured growth of rottenness,
And lichen veiled the Image of Taman
In leprosy. The Basin of the Blood
Above the altar held the morning sun:
A winking ruby on its heart: below,
Face hid in hands, the maid Bisesa lay.

Er-Heb beyond the Hills of Ao-Safai
Bears witness to the truth, and Ao-Safai
Hath told the men of Gorukh. Thence the tale
Comes westward o'er the peaks to India.

THE EXPLANATION

(1890)

LOVE and Death once ceased their strife
At the Tavern of Man's Life.
Called for wine, and threw—alas!—
Each his quiver on the grass.
When the bout was o'er they found
Mingled arrows strewed the ground.
Hastily they gathered then
Each the loves and lives of men.
Ah, the fateful dawn deceived!
Mingled arrows each one sheaved;
Death's dread armoury was stored
With the shafts he most abhorred;
Love's light quiver groaned beneath
Venom-headed darts of Death.

Thus it was they wrought our woe
At the Tavern long ago.
Tell me, do our masters know,
Loosing blindly as they fly,
Old men love while young men die?

THE GIFT OF THE SEA

(1890)

THE dead child lay in the shroud,
And the widow watched beside;
And her mother slept, and the Channel swept
The gale in the teeth of the tide.

But the mother laughed at all.
'I have lost my man in the sea,
And the child is dead. Be still,' she said,
'What more can ye do to me?'

The widow watched the dead,
And the candle guttered low,
And she tried to sing the Passing Song
That bids the poor soul go.

And 'Mary take you now,' she sang,
'That lay against my heart.'
And 'Mary smooth your crib to-night,'
But she could not say 'Depart.'

Then came a cry from the sea,
But the sea-rime blinded the glass,
And 'Heard ye nothing, mother?' she said,
''Tis the child that waits to pass.'

And the nodding mother sighed.
'Tis a lambing ewe in the whin,
For why should the christened soul cry out
That never knew of sin?'

'O feet I have held in my hand,
O hands at my heart to catch,
How should they know the road to go,
And how should they lift the latch?'

They laid a sheet to the door,
With the little quilt atop,
That it might not hurt from the cold or the dirt,
But the crying would not stop.

The widow lifted the latch
And strained her eyes to see,
And opened the door on the bitter shore
To let the soul go free.

There was neither glimmer nor ghost,
There was neither spirit nor spark,
And 'Heard ye nothing, mother?' she said,
'Tis crying for me in the dark.'

And the nodding mother sighed:
'Tis sorrow makes ye dull;
Have ye yet to learn the cry of the tern,
Or the wail of the wind-blown gull?'

'The terns are blown inland,
The gray gull follows the plough.
'Twas never a bird, the voice I heard,
O mother, I hear it now!'

'Lie still, dear lamb, lie still;
The child is passed from harm,
'Tis the ache in your breast that broke your rest
And the feel of an empty arm.'

She put her mother aside,
'In Mary's name let be!
For the peace of my soul I must go,' she said,
And she went to the calling sea.

In the heel of the wind-bit pier,
Where the twisted weed was piled,
She came to the life she had missed by an hour,
For she came to a little child.

She laid it into her breast,
And back to her mother she came,
But it would not feed and it would not heed,
Though she gave it her own child's name.

And the dead child dripped on her breast,
And her own in the shroud lay stark;
And 'God forgive us, mother,' she said,
'We let it die in the dark!'

EVARRA AND HIS GODS

(1890)

READ here:
This is the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because the city gave him of her gold,
Because the caravans brought turquoises,
Because his life was sheltered by the King,
So that no man should maim him, none should steal,
Or break his rest with babble in the streets
When he was weary after toil, he made
An image of his God in gold and pearl,
With turquoise diadem and human eyes,
A wonder in the sunshine, known afar,
And worshipped by the King; but, drunk with pride,
Because the city bowed to him for God,
He wrote above the shrine: 'Thus Gods are made,
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.'
And all the city praised him. . . . Then he died.

Read here the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because the city had no wealth to give,
Because the caravans were spoiled afar,
Because his life was threatened by the King,
So that all men despised him in the streets,

He hewed the living rock, with sweat and tears,
And reared a God against the morning-gold,
A terror in the sunshine, seen afar,
And worshipped by the King; but, drunk with pride,
Because the city fawned to bring him back,
He carved upon the plinth: 'Thus Gods are made,
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.'
And all the people praised him. . . . Then he died.

Read here the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because he lived among a simple folk,
Because his village was between the hills,
Because he smeared his cheeks with blood of ewes,
He cut an idol from a fallen pine,
Smeared blood upon its cheeks, and wedged a shell
Above its brows for eyes, and gave it hair
Of trailing moss, and plaited straw for crown.
And all the village praised him for this craft,
And brought him butter, honey, milk, and curds.
Wherefore, because the shoutings drove him mad,
He scratched upon that log: 'Thus Gods are made,
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.'
And all the people praised him. . . . Then he died.

Read here the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because his God decreed one clot of blood
Should swerve one hair's-breadth from the pulse's path,
And chafe his brain, Evarra mowed alone,

Rag-wrapped, among the cattle in the fields,
Counting his fingers, jesting with the trees,
And mocking at the mist, until his God
Drove him to labour. Out of dung and horns
Dropped in the mire he made a monstrous God,
Abhorrent, shapeless, crowned with plantain tufts,
And when the cattle lowed at twilight-time,
He dreamed it was the clamour of lost crowds,
And howled among the beasts: 'Thus Gods are made,
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die.'
Thereat the cattle bellowed. . . . Then he died.

Yet at the last he came to Paradise,
And found his own four Gods, and that he wrote;
And marvelled, being very near to God,
What oaf on earth had made his toil God's law,
Till God said mocking: 'Mock not. These be thine.'
Then cried Evarra: 'I have sinned!'—'Not so.
If thou hadst written otherwise, thy Gods
Had rested in the mountain and the mine,
And I were poorer by four wondrous Gods,
And thy more wondrous law, Evarra. Thine,
Servant of shouting crowds and lowing kine.'

Thereat, with laughing mouth, but tear-wet eyes,
Evarra cast his Gods from Paradise.

This is the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.

THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

(1890)

WHEN the flush of a new-born sun fell first on Eden's green and gold,
Our father Adam sat under the Tree and scratched with a stick in the mould;
And the first rude sketch that the world had seen was joy to his mighty heart,
Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves, 'It's pretty, but is it Art?'

Wherefore he called to his wife, and fled to fashion his work anew—
The first of his race who cared a fig for the first, most dread review;
And he left his lore to the use of his sons—and that was a glorious gain
When the Devil chuckled 'Is it Art?' in the ear of the branded Cain.

They builded a tower to shiver the sky and wrench the stars apart,
Till the Devil grunted behind the bricks: 'It's striking, but is it Art?'

THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

The stone was dropped at the quarry-side and the idle derrick swung,
While each man talked of the aims of Art, and each in an alien tongue.

They fought and they talked in the North and the South, they talked and they fought in the West,
Till the waters rose on the pitiful land, and the poor Red Clay had rest—
Had rest till the dank blank-canvas dawn when the dove was preened to start,
And the Devil bubbled below the keel: 'It's human, but is it Art?'

The tale is as old as the Eden Tree—and new as the new-cut tooth—
For each man knows ere his lip-thatch grows he is master of Art and Truth;
And each man hears as the twilight nears, to the beat of his dying heart,
The Devil drum on the darkened pane: 'You did it, but was it Art?'

We have learned to whittle the Eden Tree to the shape of a surplice-peg,
We have learned to bottle our parents twain in the yelk of an addled egg,
We know that the tail must wag the dog, for the horse is drawn by the cart;
But the Devil whoops, as he whooped of old: 'It's clever, but is it Art?'

THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

When the flicker of London sun falls faint on the Club-room's green and gold,
The sons of Adam sit them down and scratch with their pens in the mould—
They scratch with their pens in the mould of their graves, and the ink and the anguish start,
For the Devil mutters behind the leaves: 'It's pretty, but is it Art?'

Now, if we could win to the Eden Tree where the Four Great Rivers flow,
And the Wreath of Eve is red on the turf as she left it long ago,
And if we could come when the sentry slept and softly scurry through,
By the favour of God we might know as much—as our father Adam knew.

THE LEGEND OF EVIL

(1890)

I

THIS is the sorrowful story
Told when the twilight fails
And the monkeys walk together
Holding each other's tails:—

'Our fathers lived in the forest,
Foolish people were they,
They went down to the cornland
To teach the farmers to play.

'Our fathers frisked in the millet,
Our fathers skipped in the wheat,
Our fathers hung from the branches,
Our fathers danced in the street.

'Then came the terrible farmers,
Nothing of play they knew,
Only . . . they caught our fathers
And set them to labour too!

'Set them to work in the cornland
With ploughs and sickles and flails,
Put them in mud-walled prisons
And—cut off their beautiful tails!

'Now, we can watch our fathers,
Sullen and bowed and old,
Stooping over the millet,
Sharing the silly mould,

'Driving a foolish furrow,
Mending a muddy yoke,
Sleeping in mud-walled prisons,
Steeping their food in smoke.

'We may not speak to our fathers,
For if the farmers knew
They would come up to the forest
And set us to labour too.'

This is the horrible story
Told as the twilight fails
And the monkeys walk together
Holding each other's tails.

II

'Twas when the rain fell steady an' the Ark was pitched an' ready,
That Noah got his orders for to take the bastes below;
He dragged them all together by the horn an' hide an' feather,
An' all excipt the Donkey was agreeable to go.

Thin Noah spoke him fairly, thin talked to him sevarely,
An' thin he cursed him squarely to the glory av the Lord:—
'Divil take the ass that bred you, and the greater ass that fed you—

Divil go wid you, ye spalpeen!' an' the Donkey went aboard.

But the wind was always failin', an' 'twas most onaisy sailin',
An' the ladies in the cabin couldn't stand the stable air;
An' the bastes betwuxt the hatches, they tuk an' died in batches,
Till Noah said:—'There's wan av us that hasn't paid his fare!'

For he heard a flusteration wid the bastes av all creation—
The trumpetin' av elephints an' bellowin' av whales;
An' he saw forninst the windy whin he wint to stop the shindy
The Divil wid a stable-fork bedivillin' their tails.

The Divil cursed outrageous, but Noah said umbrageous:—
'To what am I indebted for this tenant-right invasion?'
An' the Divil gave for answer:—'Evict me if you can, sir,
For I came in wid the Donkey—on Your Honour's invitation.'

THE ENGLISH FLAG

(1891)

Above the portico a flag-staff, bearing the Union Jack, remained fluttering in the flames for some time, but ultimately when it fell the crowds rent the air with shouts, and seemed to see significance in the incident.

Daily Papers.

WINDS of the World, give answer! They are whimpering to and fro—
And what should they know of England who only England know?—
The poor little street-bred people that vapour and fume and brag,
They are lifting their heads in the stillness to yelp at the English Flag!

Must we borrow a clout from the Boer—to plaster anew with dirt?
An Irish liar's bandage, or an English coward's shirt?
We may not speak of England; her Flag's to sell or share.
What is the Flag of England? Winds of the World, declare!

The North Wind blew:—'From Bergen my steel-shod vanguards go;
I chase your lazy whalers home from the Disko floe;

By the great North Lights above me I work the will of God,
And the liner splits on the ice-field or the Dogger fills with cod.

'I barred my gates with iron, I shuttered my doors with flame,
Because to force my ramparts your nutshell navies came;
I took the sun from their presence, I cut them down with my blast,
And they died, but the Flag of England blew free ere the spirit passed.

'The lean white bear hath seen it in the long, long Arctic night,
The musk-ox knows the standard that flouts the Northern Light:
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my bergs to dare,
Ye have but my drifts to conquer. Go forth, for it is there!'

The South Wind sighed:—'From the Virgins my mid-sea course was ta'en
Over a thousand islands lost in an idle main,
Where the sea-egg flames on the coral and the long-backed breakers croon
Their endless ocean legends to the lazy, locked lagoon.

'Strayed amid lonely islets, mazed amid outer keys,
I waked the palms to laughter—I tossed the scud in the breeze—

Never was isle so little, never was sea so lone,
But over the scud and the palm-trees an English flag was flown.

'I have wrenched it free from the halliard to hang for a wisp on the Horn;
I have chased it north to the Lizard—ribboned and rolled and torn;
I have spread its fold o'er the dying, adrift in a hopeless sea;
I have hurled it swift on the slaver, and seen the slave set free.

'My basking sunfish know it, and wheeling albatross,
Where the lone wave fills with fire beneath the Southern Cross.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my reefs to dare,
Ye have but my seas to furrow. Go forth, for it is there!'

The East Wind roared:—'From the Kuriles, the Bitter Seas, I come,
And me men call the Home-Wind, for I bring the English home.
Look—look well to your shipping! By the breath of my mad typhoon
I swept your close-packed Praya and beached your best at Kowloon!

'The reeling junks behind me and the racing seas before,
I raped your richest roadstead—I plundered Singapore!
I set my hand on the Hoogli; as a hooded snake she rose,
And I flung your stoutest steamers to roost with the startled crows.

'Never the lotos closes, never the wild-fowl wake,
But a soul goes out on the East Wind that died for England's sake—
Man or woman or suckling, mother or bride or maid—
Because on the bones of the English the English Flag is stayed.

'The desert-dust hath dimmed it, the flying wild-ass knows,
The scared white leopard winds it across the taintless snows.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my sun to dare,
Ye have but my sands to travel. Go forth, for it is there!'

The West Wind called:—'In squadrons the thoughtless galleons fly
That bear the wheat and cattle lest street-bred people die.
They make my might their porter, they make my house their path,
Till I loose my neck from their rudder and whelm them all in my wrath.

'I draw the gliding fog-bank as a snake is drawn from the hole,
They bellow one to the other, the frighted ship-bells toll,
For day is a drifting terror till I raise the shroud with my breath,
And they see strange bows above them and the two go locked to death.

'But whether in calm or wrack-wreath, whether by dark
or day,
I heave them whole to the conger or rip their plates
away,
First of the scattered legions, under a shrieking sky,
Dipping between the rollers, the English Flag goes by.

'The dead dumb fog hath wrapped it—the frozen dews
have kissed—
The naked stars have seen it, a fellow-star in the mist.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my breath
to dare,
Ye have but my waves to conquer. Go forth, for it is
there!'

'CLEARED'

(1890)

(In Memory of a Commission)

HELP for a patriot distressed, a spotless spirit hurt,
Help for an honourable clan sore trampled in the dirt!
From Queenstown Bay to Donegal, O listen to my song,
The honourable gentlemen have suffered grievous wrong.

Their noble names were mentioned—O the burning black disgrace!—
By a brutal Saxon paper in an Irish shooting-case;
They sat upon it for a year, then steeled their heart to brave it,
And 'coruscating innocence' the learned Judges gave it.

Bear witness, Heaven, of that grim crime beneath the surgeon's knife,
The honourable gentlemen deplored the loss of life!
Bear witness of those chanting choirs that burk and shirk and snigger,
No man laid hand upon the knife or finger to the trigger!

Cleared in the face of all mankind beneath the winking skies,
Like phœnixes from Phœnix Park (and what lay there) they rise!

'CLEARED'

Go shout it to the emerald seas—give word to Erin now,
Her honourable gentlemen are cleared—and this is how:—

They only paid the Moonlighter his cattle-hocking price,
They only helped the murderer with counsel's best advice,
But—sure it keeps their honour white—the learned Court believes
They never give a piece of plate to murderers and thieves.

They never told the ramping crowd to card a woman's hide,
They never marked a man for death—what fault of theirs he died?—
They only said 'intimidate,' and talked and went away—
By God, the boys that did the work were braver men than they!

Their sin it was that fed the fire—small blame to them that heard—
The 'bhoys' get drunk on rhetoric, and madden at a word—
They knew whom they were talking at, if they were Irish too,
The gentlemen that lied in Court, they knew, and well they knew.

They only took the Judas-gold from Fenians out of jail,
They only fawned for dollars on the blood-dyed Clan-na-Gael.

'CLEARED'

If black is black or white is white, in black and white
it's down,
They're only traitors to the Queen and rebels to the
Crown.

'Cleared,' honourable gentlemen! Be thankful it's no
more:—
The widow's curse is on your house, the dead are at your
door.
On you the shame of open shame, on you from North to
South
The hand of every honest man flat-heeled across your
mouth.

'Less black than we were painted'?—Faith, no word of
black was said;
The lightest touch was human blood, and that, you
know, runs red.
It's sticking to your fist to-day for all your sneer and scoff,
And by the Judge's well-weighed word you cannot wipe
it off.

Hold up those hands of innocence—go, scare your sheep
together,
The blundering, tripping tups that bleat behind the
old bell-wether;
And if they snuff the taint and break to find another pen,
Tell them it's tar that glistens so, and daub them yours
again!

'The charge is old'?—As old as Cain—as fresh as yes-
terday;
Old as the Ten Commandments—have ye talked those
laws away?

'CLEARED'

If words are words, or death is death, or powder sends
the ball,
You spoke the words that sped the shot—the curse be
on you all.

'Our friends believe'? Of course they do—as sheltered
women may;
But have they seen the shrieking soul ripped from the
quivering clay?
They!—If their own front door is shut, they'll swear the
whole world's warm;
What do they know of dread of death or hanging fear of
harm?

The secret half a county keeps, the whisper in the lane,
The shriek that tells the shot went home behind the
broken pane,
The dry blood crisping in the sun that scares the honest
bees,
And shows the 'bhoys' have heard your talk—what do
they know of these?

But you—you know—ay, ten times more; the secrets of
the dead,
Black terror on the country-side by word and whisper bred,
The mangled stallion's scream at night, the tail-cropped
heifer's low.
Who set the whisper going first? You know, and well
you know!

My soul! I'd sooner lie in jail for murder plain and
straight,
Pure crime I'd done with my own hand for money, lust,
or hate,

Than take a seat in Parliament by fellow-felons cheered,
While one of those 'not provens' proved me cleared as
you are cleared.

Cleared—you that 'lost' the League accounts—go,
guard our honour still,
Go, help to make our country's laws that broke God's
law at will—
One hand stuck out behind the back, to signal 'strike
again';
The other on your dress-shirt-front to show your heart
is clane.

If black is black or white is white, in black and white it's
down,
You're only traitors to the Queen and rebels to the
Crown.
If print is print or words are words, the learned Court
perpends:—
We are not ruled by murderers, but only—by their
friends.

AN IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

(1890)

NOW this is the tale of the Council the German Kaiser decreed,
To ease the strong of their burden, to help the weak in their need,
He sent a word to the peoples, who struggle, and pant, and sweat,
That the straw might be counted fairly and the tally of bricks be set.

The Lords of Their Hands assembled; from the East and the West they drew—
Baltimore, Lille, and Essen, Brummagem, Clyde, and Crewe.
And some were black from the furnace, and some were brown from the soil,
And some were blue from the dye-vat; but all were wearied of toil.

And the young King said:—'I have found it, the road to the rest ye seek:
The strong shall wait for the weary, the hale shall halt for the weak;

With the even tramp of an army where no man breaks
from the line,
Ye shall march to peace and plenty in the bond of
brotherhood—sign!'

The paper lay on the table, the strong heads bowed
thereby,
And a wail went up from the peoples:—'Ay, sign—give
rest, for we die!'
A hand was stretched to the goose-quill, a fist was
cramped to scrawl,
When—the laugh of a blue-eyed maiden ran clear
through the council-hall.

And each one heard Her laughing as each one saw Her
plain—
Saidie, Mimi, or Olga, Gretchen, or Mary Jane.
And the Spirit of Man that is in Him to the light of the
vision woke;
And the men drew back from the paper, as a Yankee
delegate spoke:—

'There's a girl in Jersey City who works on the tele-
phone;
We're going to hitch our horses and dig for a house of
our own,
With gas and water connections, and steam heat
through to the top;
And, W. Hohenzollern, I guess I shall work till I drop.'

And an English delegate thundered:—'The weak an'
the lame be blowed!
I've a berth in the Sou'-West workshops, a home in the
Wandsworth Road;

And till the 'sociation has footed my buryin' bill,
I work for the kids an' the missus. Pull up! I'll be damned if I will!'

And over the German benches the bearded whisper ran:—
'Lager, der girls und der dollars, dey makes or dey breaks a man.
If Schmitt haf collared der dollars, he collars der girl deremit;
But if Schmitt bust in der pizness, we collars der girl from Schmitt.'

They passed one resolution:—'Your sub-committee believe
You can lighten the curse of Adam when you've lightened the curse of Eve.
But till we are built like angels, with hammer and chisel and pen,
We will work for ourself and a woman, for ever and ever, amen.'

Now this is the tale of the Council the German Kaiser held—
The day that they razored the Grindstone, the day that the Cat was belled,
The day of the Figs from Thistles, the day of the Twisted Sands,
The day that the laugh of a maiden made light of the Lords of Their Hands.

TOMLINSON

(1891)

NOW Tomlinson gave up the ghost in his house in Berkeley Square,
And a Spirit came to his bedside and gripped him by the hair—
A Spirit gripped him by the hair and carried him far away,
Till he heard as the roar of a rain-fed ford the roar of the Milky Way:
Till he heard the roar of the Milky Way die down and drone and cease,
And they came to the Gate within the Wall where Peter holds the keys.
'Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer loud and high
The good that ye did for the sake of men or ever ye came to die—
The good that ye did for the sake of men in little earth so lone!'
And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed bone.
'O I have a friend on earth,' he said, 'that was my priest and guide,
And well would he answer all for me if he were by my side.'

—'For that ye strove in neighbour-love it shall be written fair,
But now ye wait at Heaven's Gate and not in Berkeley Square:
Though we called your friend from his bed this night, he could not speak for you,
For the race is run by one and one and never by two and two.'
Then Tomlinson looked up and down, and little gain was there,
For the naked stars grinned overhead, and he saw that his soul was bare:
The Wind that blows between the worlds, it cut him like a knife,
And Tomlinson took up his tale and spoke of his good in life.
'This I have read in a book,' he said, 'and that was told to me,
And this I have thought that another man thought of a Prince in Muscovy.'
The good souls flocked like homing doves and bade him clear the path,
And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness and wrath.
'Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought,' he said, 'and the tale is yet to run:
By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer —what ha' ye done?'
Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and little good it bore,
For the Darkness stayed at his shoulder-blade and Heaven's Gate before:—

'O this I have felt, and this I have guessed, and this I have heard men say,
And this they wrote that another man wrote of a carl in Norroway.'
'Ye have read, ye have felt, ye have guessed, good lack! Ye have hampered Heaven's Gate;
There's little room between the stars in idleness to prate!
O none may reach by hired speech of neighbour, priest, and kin
Through borrowed deed to God's good meed that lies so fair within;
Get hence, get hence to the Lord of Wrong, for doom has yet to run,
And . . . the faith that ye share with Berkeley Square uphold you, Tomlinson!'

. . . . . .

The Spirit gripped him by the hair, and sun by sun they fell
Till they came to the belt of Naughty Stars that rim the mouth of Hell:
The first are red with pride and wrath, the next are white with pain,
But the third are black with clinkered sin that cannot burn again:
They may hold their path, they may leave their path, with never a soul to mark,
They may burn or freeze, but they must not cease in the Scorn of the Outer Dark.
The Wind that blows between the worlds, it nipped him to the bone,
And he yearned to the flare of Hell-gate there as the light of his own hearth-stone.
The Devil he sat behind the bars, where the desperate legions drew,

But he caught the hasting Tomlinson and would not let
him through.
'Wot ye the price of good pit-coal that I must pay?'
said he,
'That ye rank yoursel' so fit for Hell and ask no leave of
me?
I am all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that ye should give me
scorn,
For I strove with God for your First Father the day that
he was born.
Sit down, sit down upon the slag, and answer loud and
high
The harm that ye did to the Sons of Men or ever you
came to die.'
And Tomlinson looked up and up, and saw against the
night
The belly of a tortured star blood-red in Hell-Mouth
light;
And Tomlinson looked down and down, and saw be-
neath his feet
The frontlet of a tortured star milk-white in Hell-
Mouth heat.
'O I had a love on earth,' said he, 'that kissed me to my
fall,
And if ye would call my love to me I know she would
answer all.'
—'All that ye did in love forbid it shall be written fair,
But now ye wait at Hell-Mouth Gate and not in Berke-
ley Square:
Though we whistled your love from her bed to-night, I
trow she would not run,
For the sin ye do by two and two ye must pay for one
by one!'

The Wind that blows between the worlds, it cut him like
a knife,
And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his sin in life:
'Once I ha' laughed at the power of Love and twice at
the grip of the Grave,
And thrice I ha' patted my God on the head that men
might call me brave.'
The Devil he blew on a brandered soul and set it aside to
cool:—
'Do ye think I would waste my good pit-coal on the hide
of a brain-sick fool?
I see no worth in the hobnailed mirth or the jolt-head
jest ye did
That I should waken my gentlemen that are sleeping
three on a grid.'
Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and there was
little grace,
For Hell-Gate filled the houseless Soul with the Fear of
Naked Space.
'Nay, this I ha' heard,' quo' Tomlinson, 'and this was
noised abroad,
And this I ha' got from a Belgian book on the word of a
dead French lord.'
—'Ye ha' heard, ye ha' read, ye ha' got, good lack! and
the tale begins afresh—
Have ye sinned one sin for the pride o' the eye or the
sinful lust of the flesh?'
Then Tomlinson he gripped the bars and yammered,
'Let me in—
For I mind that I borrowed my neighbour's wife to sin
the deadly sin.'
The Devil he grinned behind the bars, and banked the
fires high:

'Did ye read of that sin in a book?' said he; and Tomlinson said, 'Ay!'
The Devil he blew upon his nails, and the little devils ran,
And he said: 'Go husk this whimpering thief that comes in the guise of a man:
Winnow him out 'twixt star and star, and sieve his proper worth:
There's sore decline in Adam's line if this be spawn of earth.'
Empusa's crew, so naked-new they may not face the fire,
But weep that they bin too small to sin to the height of their desire,
Over the coal they chased the Soul, and racked it all abroad,
As children rifle a caddis-case or the raven's foolish hoard.
And back they came with the tattered Thing, as children after play,
And they said: 'The soul that he got from God he has bartered clean away.
We have threshed a stook of print and book, and winnowed a chattering wind,
And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his we cannot find:
We have handled him, we have dandled him, we have seared him to the bone,
And sure if tooth and nail show truth he has no soul of his own.'
The Devil he bowed his head on his breast and rumbled deep and low:—
'I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should bid him go.

Yet close we lie, and deep we lie, and if I gave him place,
My gentlemen that are so proud would flout me to my face;
They'd call my house a common stews and me a careless host,
And—I would not anger my gentlemen for the sake of a shiftless ghost.'
The Devil he looked at the mangled Soul that prayed to feel the flame,
And he thought of Holy Charity, but he thought of his own good name:—
'Now ye could haste my coal to waste, and sit ye down to fry:
Did ye think of that theft for yourself?' said he; and Tomlinson said, 'Ay!'
The Devil he blew an outward breath, for his heart was free from care:—
'Ye have scarce the soul of a louse,' he said, 'but the roots of sin are there,
And for that sin should ye come in were I the lord alone.
But sinful pride has rule inside—and mightier than my own.
Honour and Wit, fore-damned they sit, to each his priest and whore:
Nay, scarce I dare myself go there, and you they'd torture sore.
Ye are neither spirit nor spirk,' he said; 'ye are neither book nor brute—
Go, get ye back to the flesh again for the sake of Man's repute.
I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should mock your pain,

But look that ye win to worthier sin ere ye come back again.
Get hence, the hearse is at your door—the grim black stallions wait—
They bear your clay to place to-day. Speed, lest ye come too late!
Go back to Earth with a lip unsealed—go back with an open eye,
And carry my word to the Sons of Men or ever ye come to die:
That the sin they do by two and two they must pay for one by one—
And . . . the God that you took from a printed book be with you, Tomlinson!'

L'ENVOI

(1892)

THERE'S a whisper down the field where the year
has shot her yield,
And the ricks stand gray to the sun,
Singing:—'Over then, come over, for the bee has quit
the clover,
And your English summer's done.'
You have heard the beat of the off-shore wind,
And the thresh of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song—how long! how long?
Pull out on the trail again!

Ha' done with the Tents of Shem, dear lass,
We've seen the seasons through,
And it's time to turn on the old trail, our own trail,
the out trail,
Pull out, pull out, on the Long Trail—the trail that
is always new.

It's North you may run to the rime-ringed sun
Or South to the blind Horn's hate;
Or East all the way into Mississippi Bay,
Or West to the Golden Gate;
Where the blindest bluffs hold good, dear lass,
And the wildest tales are true,

And the men bulk big on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
And life runs large on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.

The days are sick and cold, and the skies are gray and old,
And the twice-breathed airs blow damp;
And I'd sell my tired soul for the bucking beam-sea roll
Of a black Bilbao tramp;
With her load-line over her hatch, dear lass,
And a drunken Dago crew,
And her nose held down on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
From Cadiz Bar on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.

There be triple ways to take, of the eagle or the snake,
Or the way of a man with a maid;
But the sweetest way to me is a ship's upon the sea
In the heel of the North-East Trade.
Can you hear the crash on her bows, dear lass,
And the drum of the racing screw,
As she ships it green on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
As she lifts and 'scends on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new?

See the shaking funnels roar, with the Peter at the fore,
And the fenders grind and heave,
And the derricks clack and grate, as the tackle hooks the crate,
And the fall-rope whines through the sheave;

It's 'Gang-plank up and in,' dear lass,
It's 'Hawsers warp her through!'
And it's 'All clear aft' on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're backing down on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.

O the mutter overside, when the port-fog holds us tied,
And the sirens hoot their dread!
When foot by foot we creep o'er the hueless viewless deep
To the sob of the questing lead!
It's down by the Lower Hope, dear lass,
With the Gunfleet Sands in view,
Till the Mouse swings green on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
And the Gull Light lifts on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.

O the blazing tropic night, when the wake's a welt of light
That holds the hot sky tame,
And the steady fore-foot snores through the planet-powdered floors
Where the scared whale flukes in flame!
Her plates are scarred by the sun, dear lass,
And her ropes are taunt with the dew,
For we're booming down on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're sagging south on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.

L'ENVOI

Then home, get her home, where the drunken rollers comb,
And the shouting seas drive by,
And the engines stamp and ring, and the wet bows reel and swing,
And the Southern Cross rides high!
Yes, the old lost stars wheel back, dear lass,
That blaze in the velvet blue.
They're all old friends on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
They're God's own guides on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.

Fly forward, O my heart, from the Foreland to the Start—
We're steaming all-too slow,
And it's twenty thousand mile to our little lazy isle
Where the trumpet-orchids blow!
You have heard the call of the off-shore wind
And the voice of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song—how long! how long?
Pull out on the trail again!

The Lord knows what we may find, dear lass,
And The Deuce knows what we may do—
But we're back once more on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're down, hull down on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.

THE END

THE FIVE NATIONS
THE SEVEN SEAS

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THE FIVE NATIONS

DEDICATION

(1903)

BEFORE a midnight breaks in storm,
Or herded sea in wrath,
Ye know what wavering gusts inform
The greater tempest's path;
Till the loosed wind
Drive all from mind,
Except Distress, which, so will prophets cry,
O'ercame them, houseless, from the unhinting sky.

Ere rivers league against the land
In piratry of flood,
Ye know what waters slip and stand
Where seldom water stood.
Yet who will note,
Till fields afloat,
And washen carcass and the returning well,
Trumpet what these poor heralds strove to tell?

Ye know who use the Crystal Ball
(To peer by stealth on Doom),
The Shade that, shaping first of all,
Prepares an empty room.
Then doth It pass
Like breath from glass,
But, on the extorted vision bowed intent,
No man considers why It came or went.

Before the years reborn behold
  Themselves with stranger eye,
And the sport-making Gods of old,
  Like Samson slaying, die,
    Many shall hear
    The all-pregnant sphere,
Bow to the birth and sweat, but—speech denied—
Sit dumb or—dealt in part—fall weak and wide.

Yet instant to fore-shadowed need
  The eternal balance swings;
That winged men the Fates may breed
  So soon as Fate hath wings.
    These shall possess
    Our littleness,
And in the imperial task (as worthy) lay
Up our lives' all to piece one giant day.

THE SEA AND THE HILLS

(1901–1902)

WHO hath desired the Sea?—the sight of salt water unbounded—
The heave and the halt and the hurl and the crash of the comber wind-hounded?
The sleek-barrelled swell before storm, gray, foamless, enormous, and growing—
Stark calm on the lap of the Line or the crazy-eyed hurricane blowing—
His Sea in no showing the same—his Sea and the same 'neath each showing—
His Sea as she slackens or thrills?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise hillmen desire their Hills!

Who hath desired the Sea?—the immense and contemptuous surges?
The shudder, the stumble, the swerve, as the star-stabbing bowsprit emerges?
The orderly clouds of the Trades, and the ridged, roaring sapphire thereunder—
Unheralded cliff-haunting flaws and the headsails' low-volleying thunder
His Sea in no wonder the same—his Sea and the same through each wonder:

His Sea as she rages or stills?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise hillmen desire their Hills.

Who hath desired the Sea? Her menaces swift as her mercies?
The in-rolling walls of the fog and the silver-winged breeze that disperses?
The unstable mined berg going South and the calvings and groans that declare it;
White water half-guessed overside and the moon breaking timely to bare it;
His Sea as his fathers have dared—his Sea as his children shall dare it—
His Sea as she serves him or kills?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise hillmen desire their Hills.

Who hath desired the Sea? Her excellent loneliness rather
Than forecourts of kings, and her outermost pits than the streets where men gather
Inland, among dust, under trees—inland where the slayer may slay him;
Inland, out of reach of her arms, and the bosom whereon he must lay him—
His Sea at the first that betrayed—at the last that shall never betray him—
His Sea that his being fulfils?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise hillmen desire their Hills.

THE BELL BUOY

(1896)

THEY christened my brother of old—
And a saintly name he bears—
They gave him his place to hold
At the head of the belfry-stairs,
Where the minster-towers stand
And the breeding kestrels cry.
Would I change with my brother a league inland?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not I!

In the flush of the hot June prime,
O'er smooth flood-tides afire,
I hear him hurry the chime
To the bidding of checked Desire,
Till the sweated ringers tire
And the wild bob-majors die.
Could I wait for my turn in the godly choir?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not I!

When the smoking scud is blown,
When the greasy wind-rack lowers,
Apart and at peace and alone,
He counts the changeless hours.
He wars with darkling Powers

(I war with a darkling sea);
Would he stoop to my work in the gusty mirk?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not he!

There was never a priest to pray,
There was never a hand to toll,
When they made me guard of the bay,
And moored me over the shoal.
I rock, I reel, and I roll—
My four great hammers ply—
Could I speak or be still at the Church's will?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not I!

The landward marks have failed,
The fog-bank glides unguessed,
The seaward lights are veiled,
The spent deep feigns her rest.
But my ear is laid to her breast,
I lift to the swell—I cry!
Could I wait in sloth on the Church's oath?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not I!

At the careless end of night
I thrill to the nearing screw;
I turn in the nearing light
And I call to the drowsy crew;
And the mud boils foul and blue
As the blind bow backs away.
Will they give me their thanks if they clear the banks?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not they!

THE BELL BUOY

The beach-pools cake and skim,
The bursting spray-heads freeze,
I gather on crown and rim
The gray, grained ice of the seas
Where, sheathed from bitt to trees,
The plunging colliers lie.
Would I barter my place for the Church's grace?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not I!

Through the blur of the whirling snow,
Or the black of the inky sleet,
The lanterns gather and grow,
And I look for the homeward fleet.
Rattle of block and sheet—
'Ready about—stand by!'
Shall I ask them a fee ere they fetch the quay?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not I!

I dip and I surge and I swing
In the rip of the racing tide,
By the gates of doom I sing,
On the horns of death I ride.
A ship-length overside,
Between the course and the sand,
Fretted and bound I bide
Peril whereof I cry.
Would I change with my brother a league inland?
('Shoal! 'Ware shoal!') Not I!

CRUISERS

(1899)

AS our mother the Frigate, bepainted and fine,
Made play for her bully the Ship of the Line;
So we, her bold daughters by iron and fire,
Accost and decoy to our masters' desire.

Now pray you consider what toils we endure,
Night-walking wet sea-lanes, a guard and a lure;
Since half of our trade is that same pretty sort
As mettlesome wenches do practise in port.

For this is our office: to spy and make room,
As hiding yet guiding the foe to their doom;
Surrounding, confounding, to bait and betray
And tempt them to battle the seas' width away.

The pot-bellied merchant foreboding no wrong
With headlight and sidelight he lieth along,
Till, lightless and lightfoot and lurking, leap we
To force him discover his business by sea.

And when we have wakened the lust of a foe,
To draw him by flight toward our bullies we go,
Till, 'ware of strange smoke stealing nearer, he flies—
Or our bullies close in for to make him good prize.

So, when we have spied on the path of their host,
One flieth to carry that word to the coast;
And, lest by false doubling they turn and go free,
One lieth behind them to follow and see.

Anon we return, being gathered again,
Across the sad valleys all drabbled with rain—
Across the gray ridges all crisped and curled—
To join the long dance round the curve of the world.

The bitter salt spindrift: the sun-glare likewise:
The moon-track a-tremble bewilders our eyes,
Where, linking and lifting, our sisters we hail
'Twixt wrench of cross-surges or plunge of head-gale.

As maidens awaiting the bride to come forth
Make play with light jestings and wit of no worth,
So, widdershins circling the bride-bed of death,
Each fleereth her neighbour and signeth and saith:—

'What see ye? Their signals, or levin afar?
What hear ye? God's thunder, or guns of our war?
What mark ye? Their smoke, or the cloud-rack out-
blown?
What chase ye? Their lights, or the Day-star low
down?'

So, times past all number deceived by false shows,
Deceiving we cumber the road of our foes,
For this is our virtue: to track and betray;
Preparing great battles a sea's width away.

Now peace is at end and our peoples take heart,
For the laws are clean gone that restrained our art;
Up and down the near headlands and against the far
wind
We are loosed (O be swift!) to the work of our kind!

THE DESTROYERS

(1898)

THE strength of twice three thousand horse
That seek the single goal;
The line that holds the rending course,
The hate that swings the whole:
The stripped hulls, slinking through the gloom,
At gaze and gone again—
The Brides of Death that wait the groom—
The Choosers of the Slain!

Off-shore where sea and skyline blend
In rain, the daylight dies;
The sullen, shouldering swells attend
Night and our sacrifice.
Adown the stricken capes no flare—
No mark on spit or bar,—
Girdled and desperate we dare
The blindfold game of war.

Nearer the up-flung beams that spell
The council of our foes;
Clearer the barking guns that tell
Their scattered flank to close.

Sheer to the trap they crowd their way
From ports for this unbarred.
Quiet, and count our laden prey,
The convoy and her guard!

On shoal with scarce a foot below,
Where rock and islet throng,
Hidden and hushed we watch them throw
Their anxious lights along.
Not here, not here your danger lies—
(Stare hard, O hooded eyne!)
Save where the dazed rock-pigeons rise
The lit cliffs give no sign.

Therefore—to break the rest ye seek,
The Narrow Seas to clear—
Hark to the siren's whimpering shriek—
The driven death is here!
Look to your van a league away,—
What midnight terror stays
The bulk that checks against the spray
Her crackling tops ablaze?

Hit, and hard hit! The blow went home,
The muffled, knocking stroke—
The steam that overruns the foam—
The foam that thins to smoke—
The smoke that clokes the deep aboil—
The deep that chokes her throes
Till, streaked with ash and sleeked with oil,
The lukewarm whirlpools close!

THE DESTROYERS

A shadow down the sickened wave
  Long since her slayer fled:
But hear their chattering quick-fires rave
  Astern, abeam, ahead!
Panic that shells the drifting spar—
  Loud waste with none to check—
Mad fear that rakes a scornful star
  Or sweeps a consort's deck!

Now, while their silly smoke hangs thick,
  Now ere their wits they find,
Lay in and lance them to the quick—
  Our gallied whales are blind!
Good luck to those that see the end,
  Good-bye to those that drown—
For each his chance as chance shall send—
  And God for all! Shut down!

The strength of twice three thousand horse
  That serve the one command;
The hand that heaves the headlong force,
  The hate that backs the hand:
The doom-bolt in the darkness freed,
  The mine that splits the main;
The white-hot wake, the 'wildering speed—
  The Choosers of the Slain!

WHITE HORSES

(1897)

'WHERE run your colts at pasture?
Where hide your mares to breed?'
'Mid bergs about the Ice-cap
Or wove Sargasso weed;
By chartless reef and channel,
Or crafty coastwise bars,
But most the ocean-meadows
All purple to the stars!

'Who holds the rein upon you?'
The latest gale let free.
'What meat is in your mangers?'
The glut of all the sea.
'Twixt tide and tide's returning
Great store of newly dead,—
The bones of those that faced us,
And the hearts of those that fled.

Afar, off-shore and single,
Some stallion, rearing swift,
Neighs hungry for new fodder,
And calls us to the drift.

Then down the cloven ridges—
  A million hooves unshod—
Break forth the mad White Horses
  To seek their meat from God!

Girth-deep in hissing water
  Our furious vanguard strains—
Through mist of mighty tramplings
  Roll up the fore-blown manes—
A hundred leagues to leeward,
  Ere yet the deep is stirred,
The groaning rollers carry
  The coming of the herd!

'Whose hand may grip your nostrils—
  Your forelock who may hold?'
E'en they that use the broads with us—
  The riders bred and bold,
That spy upon our matings,
  That rope us where we run—
They know the strong White Horses
  From father unto son.

We breathe about their cradles,
  We race their babes ashore,
We snuff against their thresholds,
  We nuzzle at their door;
By day with stamping squadrons,
  By night in whinnying droves,
Creep up the wise White Horses,
  To call them from their loves.

'And come they for your calling?'
  No wit of man may save.

They hear the loosed White Horses
  Above their fathers' grave;
And, kin of those we crippled,
  And, sons of those we slew,
Spur down the wild white riders
  To school the herds anew.

'What service have ye paid them,
  Oh jealous steeds and strong?'
Save we that throw their weaklings,
  Is none dare work them wrong;
While thick around the homestead
  Our snow-backed leaders graze—
A guard behind their plunder,
  And a veil before their ways.

With march and countermarchings—
  With weight of wheeling hosts—
Stray mob or bands embattled—
  We ring the chosen coasts:
And, careless of our clamour
  That bids the stranger fly,
At peace within our pickets
  The wild white riders lie.

. . . . . .

Trust ye the curdled hollows—
  Trust ye the neighing wind—
Trust ye the moaning ground-swell—
  Our herds are close behind!
To bray your foeman's armies—
  To chill and snap his sword—
Trust ye the wild White Horses,
  The Horses of the Lord!

THE SECOND VOYAGE

(1903)

WE'VE sent our little Cupids all ashore—
They were frightened, they were tired, they were cold;
Our sails of silk and purple go to store,
And we've cut away our mast of beaten gold
(Foul weather!)
Oh 'tis hemp and singing pine for to stand against the brine,
But Love he is the master as of old!

The sea has shorn our galleries away,
The salt has soiled our gilding past remede;
Our paint is flaked and blistered by the spray,
Our sides are half a fathom furred in weed
(Foul weather!)
And the doves of Venus fled and the petrels came instead,
But Love he was our master at our need!

'Was Youth would keep no vigil at the bow,
'Was Pleasure at the helm too drunk to steer—
We've shipped three able quartermasters now,
Men call them Custom, Reverence, and Fear
(Foul weather!)

They are old and scarred and plain, but we'll run no risk again
From any Port o' Paphos mutineer!

We seek no more the tempest for delight,
We skirt no more the indraught and the shoal—
We ask no more of any day or night
Than to come with least adventure to our goal
(Foul weather!)
What we find we needs must brook, but we do not go to look,
Nor tempt the Lord our God that saved us whole!

Yet, caring so, not overly we care
To brace and trim for every foolish blast,
If the squall be pleased to sweep us unaware,
He may bellow off to leeward like the last
(Foul weather!)
We will blame it on the deep (for the watch must have their sleep),
And Love can come and wake us when 'tis past.

Oh launch them down with music from the beach,
Oh warp them out with garlands from the quays—
Most resolute—a damsel unto each—
New prows that seek the old Hesperides!
(Foul weather!)
Though we know the voyage is vain, yet we see our path again
In the saffroned bridesails scenting all the seas!
(Foul weather!)

THE DYKES

(1902)

WE have no heart for the fishing, we have no hand for the oar—
All that our fathers taught us of old pleases us now no more;
All that our own hearts bid us believe we doubt where we do not deny—
There is no proof in the bread we eat or rest in the toil we ply.

Look you, our foreshore stretches far through sea-gate, dyke, and groin—
Made land all, that our fathers made, where the flats and the fairway join.
They forced the sea a sea-league back. They died, and their work stood fast.
We were born to peace in the lee of the dykes, but the time of our peace is past.

Far off, the full tide clambers and slips, mouthing and testing all,
Nipping the flanks of the water-gates, baying along the wall;
Turning the shingle, returning the shingle, changing the set of the sand . . .
We are too far from the beach, men say, to know how the outworks stand.

So we come down, uneasy, to look, uneasily pacing the beach.
These are the dykes our fathers made: we have never known a breach.
Time and again has the gale blown by and we were not afraid;
Now we come only to look at the dykes—at the dykes our fathers made.

O'er the marsh where the homesteads cower apart the harried sunlight flies,
Shifts and considers, wanes and recovers, scatters and sickens and dies—
An evil ember bedded in ash—a spark blown west by the wind . . .
We are surrendered to night and the sea—the gale and the tide behind!

At the bridge of the lower saltings the cattle gather and blare,
Roused by the feet of running men, dazed by the lantern glare.
Unbar and let them away for their lives—the levels drown as they stand,
Where the flood-wash forces the sluices aback and the ditches deliver inland.

Ninefold deep to the top of the dykes the galloping breakers stride,
And their overcarried spray is a sea—a sea on the landward side.

Coming, like stallions they paw with their hooves, going they snatch with their teeth,
Till the bents and the furze and the sand are dragged out, and the old-time wattles beneath!

Bid men gather fuel for fire, the tar and the oil and the tow—
Flame we shall need, not smoke, in the dark if the riddled seabanks go.
Bid the ringers watch in the tower (who knows what the dawn shall prove?)
Each with his rope between his feet and the trembling bells above.

Now we can only wait till the day, wait and apportion our shame.
These are the dykes our fathers left, but we would not look to the same.
Time and again were we warned of the dykes, time and again we delayed:
Now, it may fall, we have slain our sons as our fathers we have betrayed.
. . . . . .
Walking along the wreck of the dykes, watching the work of the seas,
These were the dykes our fathers made to our great profit and ease;
But the peace is gone and the profit is gone, and the old sure day withdrawn . . .
That our own houses show as strange when we come back in the dawn!

THE SONG OF DIEGO VALDEZ

(1902)

THE God of Fair Beginnings
Hath prospered here my hand—
The cargoes of my lading,
And the keels of my command.
For out of many ventures
That sailed with hope as high,
My own have made the better trade,
And Admiral am I!

To me my King's much honour,
To me my people's love—
To me the pride of Princes
And power all pride above;
To me the shouting cities,
To me the mob's refrain:—
'Who knows not noble Valdez,
Hath never heard of Spain.'

But I remember comrades—
Old playmates on new seas—
Whenas we traded orpiment
Among the savages—

THE SONG OF DIEGO VALDEZ

A thousand leagues to south'ard
And thirty years removed—
They knew not noble Valdez,
But me they knew and loved.

Then they that found good liquor,
They drank it not alone,
And they that found fair plunder,
They told us every one,
About our chosen islands
Or secret shoals between,
When, walty from far voyage,
We gathered to careen.

There burned our breaming-fagots
All pale along the shore:
There rose our worn pavilions—
A sail above an oar:
As flashed each yearning anchor
Through mellow seas afire,
So swift our careless captains
Rowed each to his desire.

Where lay our loosened harness?
Where turned our naked feet?
Whose tavern 'mid the palm-trees?
What quenchings of what heat?
Oh fountain in the desert!
Oh cistern in the waste!
Oh bread we ate in secret!
Oh cup we spilled in haste!

The youth new-taught of longing,
  The widow curbed and wan—
The goodwife proud at season,
  And the maid aware of man;
All souls unslaked, consuming,
  Defrauded in delays,
Desire not more their quittance
  Than I those forfeit days!

I dreamed to wait my pleasure
  Unchanged my spring would bide:
Wherefore, to wait my pleasure,
  I put my spring aside
Till, first in face of Fortune,
  And last in mazed disdain,
I made Diego Valdez
  High Admiral of Spain.

Then walked no wind 'neath Heaven
  Nor surge that did not aid—
I dared extreme occasion,
  Nor ever one betrayed.
They wrought a deeper treason—
  (Led seas that served my needs!)
They sold Diego Valdez
  To bondage of great deeds.

The tempest flung me seaward,
  And pinned and bade me hold
The course I might not alter—
  And men esteemed me bold!

THE SONG OF DIEGO VALDEZ

The calms embayed my quarry,
The fog-wreath sealed his eyes;
The dawn-wind brought my topsails—
And men esteemed me wise!

Yet 'spite my tyrant triumphs
Bewildered, dispossessed—
My dream held I before me—
My vision of my rest;
But, crowned by Fleet and People,
And bound by King and Pope—
Stands here Diego Valdez
To rob me of my hope!

No prayer of mine shall move him,
No word of his set free
The Lord of Sixty Pennants
And the Steward of the Sea.
His will can loose ten thousand
To seek their loves again—
But not Diego Valdez,
High Admiral of Spain.

There walks no wind 'neath Heaven
Nor wave that shall restore
The old careening riot
And the clamorous, crowded shore—
The fountain in the desert,
The cistern in the waste,
The bread we ate in secret,
The cup we spilled in haste!

Now call I to my Captains—
  For council fly the sign,
Now leap their zealous galleys
  Twelve-oared across the brine.
To me the straiter prison,
  To me the heavier chain—
To me Diego Valdez,
  High Admiral of Spain!

THE BROKEN MEN

(1902)

FOR things we never mention,
For Art misunderstood—
For excellent intention
That did not turn to good;
From ancient tales' renewing,
From clouds we would not clear—
Beyond the Law's pursuing
We fled, and settled here.

We took no tearful leaving,
We bade no long good-byes;
Men talked of crime and thieving,
Men wrote of fraud and lies.
To save our injured feelings
'Twas time and time to go—
Behind was dock and Dartmoor,
Ahead lay Callao!

The widow and the orphan
That pray for ten per cent,
They clapped their trailers on us
To spy the road we went.

They watched the foreign sailings
  (They scan the shipping still),
And that's your Christian people
  Returning good for ill!

God bless the thoughtful islands
  Where never warrants come!
God bless the just Republics
  That give a man a home,
That ask no foolish questions,
  But set him on his feet;
And save his wife and daughters
  From the workhouse and the street!

On church and square and market
  The noonday silence falls;
You'll hear the drowsy mutter
  Of the fountain in our halls.
Asleep amid the yuccas
  The city takes her ease—
Till twilight brings the land-wind
  To our clicking jalousies.

Day long the diamond weather,
  The high, unaltered blue—
The smell of goats and incense
  And the mule-bells tinkling through.
Day long the warder ocean
  That keeps us from our kin,
And once a month our levee
  When the English mail comes in.

You'll find us up and waiting
To treat you at the bar;
You'll find us less exclusive
Than the average English are.
We'll meet you with our carriage,
Too glad to show you round,
But—we do not lunch on steamers,
For they are English ground.

We sail o' nights to England
And join our smiling Boards;
Our wives go in with Viscounts
And our daughters dance with Lords.
But behind our princely doings,
And behind each coup we make,
We feel there's Something Waiting,
And—we meet It when we wake.

Ah God! One sniff of England—
To greet our flesh and blood—
To hear the hansoms slurring
Once more through London mud!
Our towns of wasted honour—
Our streets of lost delight!
How stands the old Lord Warden?
Are Dover's cliffs still white?

THE FEET OF THE YOUNG MEN

(1897)

NOW the Four-way Lodge is opened, now the Hunting Winds are loose—
Now the Smokes of Spring go up to clear the brain;
Now the Young Men's hearts are troubled for the whisper of the Trues,
Now the Red Gods make their medicine again!
Who hath seen the beaver busied? Who hath watched the black-tail mating?
Who hath lain alone to hear the wild-goose cry?
Who hath worked the chosen water where the ouananiche is waiting,
Or the sea-trout's jumping-crazy for the fly?

He must go—go—go away from here!
On the other side the world he's overdue.
'Send your road is clear before you when the old Spring-fret comes o'er you
And the Red Gods call for you!

So for one the wet sail arching through the rainbow round the bow,
And for one the creak of snow-shoes on the crust;
And for one the lakeside lilies where the bull-moose waits the cow,
And for one the mule-train coughing in the dust.

Who hath smelt wood-smoke at twilight? Who hath heard the birch-log burning?
Who is quick to read the noises of the night?
Let him follow with the others, for the Young Men's feet are turning
To the camps of proved desire and known delight!

Let him go—go, etc.

I

Do you know the blackened timber—do you know that racing stream
With the raw, right-angled log-jam at the end;
And the bar of sun-warmed shingle where a man may bask and dream
To the click of shod canoe-poles round the bend?
It is there that we are going with our rods and reels and traces,
To a silent, smoky Indian that we know—
To a couch of new-pulled hemlock with the starlight on our faces,
For the Red Gods call us out and we must go!

They must go—go, etc.

II

Do you know the shallow Baltic where the seas are steep and short,
Where the bluff, lee-boarded fishing-luggers ride?
Do you know the joy of threshing leagues to leeward of your port
On a coast you've lost the chart of overside?

It is there that I am going, with an extra hand to bale her—
Just one able 'long-shore loafer that I know.
He can take his chance of drowning, while I sail and sail and sail her,
For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

III

Do you know the pile-built village where the sago-dealers trade—
Do you know the reek of fish and wet bamboo?
Do you know the steaming stillness of the orchid-scented glade
When the blazoned, bird-winged butterflies flap through?
It is there that I am going with my camphor, net, and boxes,
To a gentle, yellow pirate that I know—
To my little wailing lemurs, to my palms and flying-foxes,
For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

IV

Do you know the world's white roof-tree—do you know that windy rift
Where the baffling mountain-eddies chop and change?
Do you know the long day's patience, belly-down on frozen drift,
While the head of heads is feeding out of range?

It is there that I am going, where the boulders and the snow lie,
With a trusty, nimble tracker that I know.
I have sworn an oath, to keep it on the Horns of Ovis Poli,
And the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

Now the Four-way Lodge is opened—now the Smokes of Council rise—
Pleasant smokes, ere yet 'twixt trail and trail they choose—
Now the girths and ropes are tested: now they pack their last supplies:
Now our Young Men go to dance before the Trues!
Who shall meet them at those altars—who shall light them to that shrine?
Velvet-footed, who shall guide them to their goal?
Unto each the voice and vision: unto each his spoor and sign—
Lonely mountain in the Northland, misty sweat-bath 'neath the Line—
And to each a man that knows his naked soul!

White or yellow, black or copper, he is waiting, as a lover,
Smoke of funnel, dust of hooves, or beat of train—
Where the high grass hides the horseman or the glaring flats discover—
Where the steamer hails the landing, or the surf-boat brings the rover—
Where the rails run out in sand-drift . . . Quick! ah, heave the camp-kit over!
For the Red Gods make their medicine again!

And we go—go—go away from here!
On the other side the world we're overdue!
'Send the road is clear before you when the old
Spring-fret comes o'er you,
'And the Red Gods call for you!

THE TRUCE OF THE BEAR

(1898)

YEARLY, with tent and rifle, our careless white men go
By the pass called Muttianee, to shoot in the vale below.
Yearly by Muttianee he follows our white men in—
Matun, the old blind beggar, bandaged from brow to chin.

Eyeless, noseless, and lipless—toothless, broken of speech,
Seeking a dole at the doorway he mumbles his tale to each;
Over and over the story, ending as he began:
'Make ye no truce with Adam-zad—the Bear that walks like a man!

'There was a flint in my musket—pricked and primed was the pan,
When I went hunting Adam-zad—the Bear that stands like a man.
I looked my last on the timber, I looked my last on the snow,
When I went hunting Adam-zad fifty summers ago!

'I knew his times and his seasons, as he knew mine, that fed
By night in the ripened maizefield and robbed my house of bread;
I knew his strength and cunning, as he knew mine, that crept
At dawn to the crowded goat-pens and plundered while I slept.

'Up from his stony playground—down from his well-digged lair—
Out on the naked ridges ran Adam-zad the Bear;
Groaning, grunting, and roaring, heavy with stolen meals,
Two long marches to northward, and I was at his heels!

'Two full marches to northward, at the fall of the second night,
I came on mine enemy Adam-zad all panting from his flight.
There was a charge in the musket—pricked and primed was the pan—
My finger crooked on the trigger—when he reared up like a man.

'Horrible, hairy, human, with paws like hands in prayer,
Making his supplication rose Adam-zad the Bear!
I looked at the swaying shoulders, at the paunch's swag and swing,
And my heart was touched with pity for the monstrous, pleading thing.

'Touched with pity and wonder, I did not fire then . . .
I have looked no more on women—I have walked no more with men.
Nearer he tottered and nearer, with paws like hands that pray—
From brow to jaw that steel-shod paw, it ripped my face away!

'Sudden, silent, and savage, searing as flame the blow—
Faceless I fell before his feet, fifty summers ago.
I heard him grunt and chuckle—I heard him pass to his den,
He left me blind to the darkened years and the little mercy of men.

'Now ye go down in the morning with guns of the newer style,
That load (I have felt) in the middle and range (I have heard) a mile?
Luck to the white man's rifle, that shoots so fast and true,
But—pay, and I lift my bandage and show what the Bear can do!'

(Flesh like slag in the furnace, knobbed and withered and gray—
Matun, the old blind beggar, he gives good worth for his pay.)
'Rouse him at noon in the bushes, follow and press him hard—
Not for his ragings and roarings flinch ye from Adam-zad.

'But (pay, and I put back the bandage) this is the time to fear,
When he stands up like a tired man, tottering near and near;
When he stands up as pleading, in wavering, man-brute guise,
When he veils the hate and cunning of the little, swinish eyes;

'When he shows as seeking quarter, with paws like hands in prayer,
That is the time of peril—the time of the Truce of the Bear!'

Eyeless, noseless, and lipless, asking a dole at the door,
Matun, the old blind beggar, he tells it o'er and o'er;
Fumbling and feeling the rifles, warming his hands at the flame,
Hearing our careless white men talk of the morrow's game;

Over and over the story, ending as he began:—
'There is no truce with Adam-zad, the Bear that looks like a man!'

THE OLD MEN

(1902)

THIS is our lot if we live so long and labour unto the end—
That we outlive the impatient years and the much too patient friend:
And because we know we have breath in our mouth and think we have thought in our head,
We shall assume that we are alive, whereas we are really dead.

We shall not acknowledge that old stars fade or alien planets arise
(That the sere bush buds or the desert blooms or the ancient well-head dries),
Or any new compass wherewith new men adventure 'neath new skies.

We shall lift up the ropes that constrained our youth to bind on our children's hands;
We shall call to the water below the bridges to return and replenish our lands;
We shall harness horses (Death's own pale horses) and scholarly plough the sands.

We shall lie down in the eye of the sun for lack of a light on our way—
We shall rise up when the day is done and chirrup, 'Behold, it is day!'
We shall abide till the battle is won ere we amble into the fray.

We shall peck out and discuss and dissect, and evert and extrude to our mind,
The flaccid tissues of long-dead issues offensive to God and mankind—
(Precisely like vultures over an ox that the Army has left behind).

We shall make walk preposterous ghosts of the glories we once created—
(Immodestly smearing from muddled palettes amazing pigments mismated)
And our friends will weep when we ask them with boasts if our natural force be abated.

The Lamp of our Youth will be utterly out: but we shall subsist on the smell of it,
And whatever we do, we shall fold our hands and suck our gums and think well of it.
Yes, we shall be perfectly pleased with our work, and that is the perfectest Hell of it!

This is our lot if we live so long and listen to those who love us—
That we are shunned by the people about and shamed by the Powers above us.

Wherefore be free of your harness betimes; but being free be assured,
That he who hath not endured to the death, from his birth he hath never endured!

THE EXPLORER

(1898)

'THERE'S no sense in going farther—it's the edge of cultivation,'
So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my crop—
Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station
Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and stop.

Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated—so:
'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
'Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!'

So I went, worn out of patience; 'never told my nearest neighbours—
Stole away with pack and ponies—left 'em drinking in the town;

And the faith that moveth mountains didn't seem to help my labours
As I faced the sheer main-ranges, whipping up and leading down.

March by march I puzzled through 'em, turning flanks and dodging shoulders,
Hurried on in hope of water, headed back for lack of grass;
Till I camped above the tree-line—drifted snow and naked boulders—
Felt free air astir to windward—knew I'd stumbled on the Pass.

'Thought to name it for the finder: but that night the Norther found me—
Froze and killed the plains-bred ponies, so I called the camp Despair
(It's the Railway Gap to-day, though). Then my Whisper waked to hound me:—
'Something lost behind the Ranges. Over yonder. Go you there!'

Then I knew, the while I doubted—knew His Hand was certain o'er me.
Still—it might be self-delusion—scores of better men had died—
I could reach the township living, but . . . He knows what terrors tore me . . .
But I didn't . . . but I didn't. I went down the other side.

Till the snow ran out in flowers, and the flowers turned
to aloes,
And the aloes sprung to thickets and a brimming
stream ran by;
But the thickets dwined to thorn-scrub, and the water
drained to shallows—
And I dropped again on desert, blasted earth, and
blasting sky. . . .

I remember lighting fires; I remember sitting by them;
I remember seeing faces, hearing voices through the
smoke;
I remember they were fancy—for I threw a stone to try
'em.
'Something lost behind the Ranges,' was the only
word they spoke.

I remember going crazy. I remember that I knew it
When I heard myself hallooing to the funny folk I saw.
Very full of dreams that desert: but my two legs took
me through it . . .
And I used to watch 'em moving with the toes all
black and raw.

But at last the country altered—White man's country
past disputing—
Rolling grass and open timber, with a hint of hills
behind—
There I found me food and water, and I lay a week re-
cruiting,
Got my strength and lost my nightmares. Then I
entered on my find.

Thence I ran my first rough survey—chose my trees and
blazed and ringed 'em—
Week by week I pried and sampled—week by week
my findings grew.
Saul he went to look for donkeys, and by God he found
a kingdom!
But by God, who sent His Whisper, I had struck the
worth of two!

Up along the hostile mountains, where the hair-poised
snow-slide shivers—
Down and through the big fat marshes that the virgin
ore-bed stains,
Till I heard the mile-wide mutterings of unimagined
rivers,
And beyond the nameless timber saw illimitable
plains!

'Plotted sites of future cities, traced the easy grades
between 'em;
Watched unharnessed rapids wasting fifty thousand
head an hour;
Counted leagues of water-frontage through the axe-ripe
woods that screen 'em—
Saw the plant to feed a people—up and waiting for
the power!

Well I know who'll take the credit—all the clever chaps
that followed—
Came, a dozen men together—never knew my desert
fears;

Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the water-holes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking. They'll be called the Pioneers!

They will find my sites of townships—not the cities that I set there.
They will rediscover rivers—not my rivers heard at night.
By my own old marks and bearings they will show me how to get there,
By the lonely cairns I builded they will guide my feet aright.

Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre?
Have I kept one single nugget—(barring samples)? No, not I.
Because my price was paid me ten times over by my Maker.
But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy.

Ores you'll find there; wood and cattle; water-transit sure and steady
(That should keep the railway rates down), coal and iron at your doors.
God took care to hide that country till He judged His people ready,
Then He chose me for His Whisper, and I've found it, and it's yours!

Yes, your 'Never-never country'—yes, your 'edge of cultivation'
And 'no sense in going farther'—till I crossed the range to see.
God forgive me! No, I didn't. It's God's present to our nation.
Anybody might have found it but—His Whisper came to Me!

THE WAGE-SLAVES

(1902)

OH glorious are the guarded heights
Where guardian souls abide—
Self-exiled from our gross delights—
Above, beyond, outside:
An ampler arc their spirit swings—
Commands a juster view—
We have their word for all these things,
Nor doubt their words are true.

Yet we the bondslaves of our day,
Whom dirt and danger press—
Co-heirs of insolence, delay,
And leagued unfaithfulness—
Such is our need must seek indeed
And, having found, engage
The men who merely do the work
For which they draw the wage.

From forge and farm and mine and bench,
Deck, altar, outpost lone—
Mill, school, battalion, counter, trench,
Rail, senate, sheepfold, throne—

THE WAGE-SLAVES

Creation's cry goes up on high
From age to cheated age:
'Send us the men who do the work
For which they draw the wage.'

Words cannot help nor wit achieve,
Nor e'en the all-gifted fool,
Too weak to enter, bide, or leave
The lists he cannot rule.
Beneath the sun we count on none
Our evil to assuage,
Except the men that do the work
For which they draw the wage.

When through the Gates of Stress and Strain
Comes forth the vast Event—
The simple, sheer, sufficing, sane
Result of labour spent—
They that have wrought the end unthought
Be neither saint nor sage,
But merely men who did the work
For which they drew the wage.

Wherefore to these the Fates shall bend
(And all old idle things—)
Wherefore on these shall Power attend
Beyond the grasp of kings,
Each in his place, by right, not grace,
Shall rule his heritage—
The men who simply do the work
For which they draw the wage.

Not such as scorn the loitering street,
  Or waste to earn its praise,
Their noontide's unreturning heat
  About their morning ways:
But such as dower each mortgaged hour
  Alike with clean courage—
Even the men who do the work
  For which they draw the wage—

Men like to Gods that do the work
  For which they draw the wage—
Begin—continue—close the work
  For which they draw the wage!

THE BURIAL

(1902)

C. J. Rhodes, buried in the Matoppos, April 10, 1902

WHEN that great Kings return to clay,
Or Emperors in their pride,
Grief of a day shall fill a day,
Because its creature died.
But we—we reckon not with those
Whom the mere Fates ordain,
This Power that wrought on us and goes
Back to the Power again.

Dreamer devout, by vision led
Beyond our guess or reach,
The travail of his spirit bred
Cities in place of speech.
So huge the all-mastering thought that drove—
So brief the term allowed—
Nations, not words, he linked to prove
His faith before the crowd.

It is his will that he look forth
Across the world he won—
The granite of the ancient North—
Great spaces washed with sun.

There shall he patient make his seat
(As when the Death he dared),
And there await a people's feet
In the paths that he prepared.

There, till the vision he foresaw
Splendid and whole arise,
And unimagined Empires draw
To council 'neath his skies,
The immense and brooding Spirit still
Shall quicken and control.
Living he was the land, and dead,
His soul shall be her soul!

GENERAL JOUBERT

(Died March 27, 1900)

WITH those that bred, with those that loosed the strife,
He had no part whose hands were clear of gain;
But subtle, strong, and stubborn, gave his life
To a lost cause, and knew the gift was vain.

Later shall rise a people, sane and great,
Forged in strong fires, by equal war made one;
Telling old battles over without hate—
Not least his name shall pass from sire to son.

He may not meet the onsweep of our van
In the doomed city when we close the score;
Yet o'er his grave—his grave that holds a man—
Our deep-tongued guns shall answer his once more!

THE PALACE

(1902)

WHEN I was a King and a Mason—a Master proven and skilled—
I cleared me ground for a palace such as a King should build.
I decreed and dug down to my levels. Presently, under the silt,
I came on the wreck of a palace such as a King had built.

There was no worth in the fashion—there was no wit in the plan—
Hither and thither, aimless, the ruined footings ran—
Masonry, brute, mishandled, but carven on every stone:
'After me cometh a Builder. Tell him, I too have known.'

Swift to my use in my trenches, where my well-planned ground-works grew,
I tumbled his quoins and his ashlars, and cut and reset them anew.
Lime I milled of the marbles: burned it, slacked it, and spread;
Taking and leaving at pleasure the gifts of the humble dead.

Yet I despised not nor gloried; yet, as we wrenched them apart,
I read in the razed foundations the heart of that builder's heart.
As he had risen and pleaded, so did I understand
The form of the dream he had followed in the face of the thing he had planned.

. . . . . .

When I was a King and a Mason—in the open noon of my pride,
They sent me a Word from the Darkness—They whispered and called me aside.
They said—'The end is forbidden.' They said—'Thy use is fulfilled,
And thy palace shall stand as that other's—the spoil of a King who shall build.'

I called my men from my trenches, my quarries, my wharves, and my shears.
All I had wrought I abandoned to the faith of the faithless years.
Only I cut on the timber, only I carved on the stone:
'After me cometh a Builder. Tell him, I too have known!'

SUSSEX

(1902)

GOD gave all men all earth to love,
But since our hearts are small,
Ordained for each one spot should prove
Beloved over all;
That as He watched Creation's birth,
So we, in godlike mood,
May of our love create our earth
And see that it is good.

So one shall Baltic pines content,
As one some Surrey glade,
Or one the palm-grove's droned lament
Before Levuka's trade.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

No tender-hearted garden crowns,
No bosomed woods adorn
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,
But gnarled and writhen thorn—

Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,
And through the gaps revealed
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim
Blue goodness of the Weald.

Clean of officious fence or hedge,
Half-wild and wholly tame,
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff-edge
As when the Romans came.
What sign of those that fought and died
At shift of sword and sword?
The barrow and the camp abide,
The sunlight and the sward.

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'west
All heavy-winged with brine,
Here lies above the folded crest
The Channel's leaden line;
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,
And here, each warning each,
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring
Along the hidden beach.

We have no waters to delight
Our broad and brookless vales—
Only the dewpond on the height
Unfed, that never fails,
Whereby no tattered herbage tells
Which way the season flies—
Only our close-bit thyme that smells
Like dawn in Paradise.

Here through the strong unhampered days
The tinkling silence thrills;
Or little, lost, Down churches praise
The Lord who made the hills:
But here the Old Gods guard their round,
And, in her secret heart,
The heathen kingdom Wilfrid found
Dreams, as she dwells, apart.

Though all the rest were all my share,
With equal soul I'd see
Her nine-and-thirty sisters fair,
Yet none more fair than she.
Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed,
And I will choose instead
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,
Black Down and Beachy Head.

I will go out against the sun
Where the rolled scarp retires,
And the Long Man of Wilmington
Looks naked toward the shires;
And east till doubling Rother crawls
To find the fickle tide,
By dry and sea-forgotten walls,
Our ports of stranded pride.

I will go north about the shaws
And the deep ghylls that breed
Huge oaks and old, the which we hold
No more than 'Sussex weed';

Or south where windy Piddinghoe's
  Begilded dolphin veers,
And red beside wide-banked Ouse
  Lie down our Sussex steers.

So to the land our hearts we give
  Till the sure magic strike,
And Memory, Use, and Love make live
  Us and our fields alike—
That deeper than our speech and thought,
  Beyond our reason's sway,
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought
  Yearns to its fellow-clay.

God gives all men all earth to love,
  But since man's heart is small,
Ordains for each one spot shall prove
  Beloved over all.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
  The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
  Yea, Sussex by the sea!

SONG OF THE WISE CHILDREN

(1902)

WHEN the darkened Fifties dip to the North,
And frost and the fog divide the air,
And the day is dead at his breaking-forth,
Sirs, it is bitter beneath the Bear!

Far to Southward they wheel and glance,
The million molten spears of morn—
The spears of our deliverance
That shine on the house where we were born.

Flying-fish about our bows,
Flying sea-fires in our wake:
This is the road to our Father's House,.
Whither we go for our soul's sake!

We have forfeited our birthright,
We have forsaken all things meet;
We have forgotten the look of light,
We have forgotten the scent of heat.

They that walk with shaded brows,
Year by year in a shining land,
They be men of our Father's House,
They shall receive us and understand.

SONG OF THE WISE CHILDREN

We shall go back by boltless doors,
To the life unaltered our childhood knew—
To the naked feet on the cool, dark floors,
And the high-ceiled rooms that the Trade blows through:

To the trumpet-flowers and the moon beyond,
And the tree-toads' chorus drowning all—
And the lisp of the split banana-frond
That talked us to sleep when we were small.

The wayside magic, the threshold spells,
Shall soon undo what the North has done—
Because of the sights and the sounds and the smells
That ran with our youth in the eye of the sun.

And Earth accepting shall ask no vows,
Nor the Sea our love nor our lover the Sky.
When we return to our Father's House
Only the English shall wonder why!

BUDDHA AT KAMAKURA

(1892)

'And there is a Japanese idol at Kamakura'

OH ye who tread the Narrow Way
By Tophet-flare to Judgment Day,
Be gentle when the 'heathen' pray
To Buddha at Kamakura!

To him the Way, the Law, Apart,
Whom Maya held beneath her heart,
Ananda's Lord the Bodhisat,
The Buddha of Kamakura.

For though he neither burns nor sees,
Nor hears ye thank your Deities,
Ye have not sinned with such as these,
His children at Kamakura;

Yet spare us still the Western joke
When joss-sticks turn to scented smoke
The little sins of little folk
That worship at Kamakura—

The gray-robed, gay-sashed butterflies
That flit beneath the Master's eyes—
He is beyond the Mysteries
But loves them at Kamakura.

And whoso will, from Pride released,
Contemning neither creed nor priest,
May feel the soul of all the East
About him at Kamakura.

Yea, every tale Ananda heard,
Of birth as fish or beast or bird,
While yet in lives the Master stirred,
The warm wind brings Kamakura.

Till drowsy eyelids seem to see
A-flower 'neath her golden htee
The Shwe-Dagon flare easterly
From Burmah to Kamakura;

And down the loaded air there comes
The thunder of Thibetan drums,
And droned—'Om mane padme oms'—
A world's width from Kamakura.

Yet Brahmans rule Benares still,
Buddh-Gaya's ruins pit the hill,
And beef-fed zealots threaten ill
To Buddha and Kamakura.

A tourist-show, a legend told,
A rusting bulk of bronze and gold,
So much, and scarce so much, ye hold
The meaning of Kamakura?

But when the morning prayer is prayed,
Think, ere ye pass to strife and trade,
Is God in human image made
No nearer than Kamakura?

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

(1899)

TAKE up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;

And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go make them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
'Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?'

Take up the White Man's burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
  Have done with childish days—
The lightly proffered laurel,
  The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
  Through all the thankless years,
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
  The judgment of your peers!

PHARAOH AND THE SERGEANT

(1897)

'. . . Consider that the meritorious services of the Sergeant Instructors attached to the Egyptian Army have been inadequately acknowledged. . . . To the excellence of their work is mainly due the great improvement that has taken place in the soldiers of H. H. the Khedive.'

Extract from letter.

SAID England unto Pharaoh, 'I must make a man of you,
That will stand upon his feet and play the game;
That will Maxim his oppressor as a Christian ought to do,'
And she sent old Pharaoh Sergeant Whatisname.
It was not a Duke nor Earl, nor yet a Vis-count—
It was not a big brass General that came;
But a man in khaki kit who could handle men a bit,
With his bedding labelled Sergeant Whatisname.

Said England unto Pharaoh, 'Though at present singing small,
You shall hum a proper tune before it ends,'
And she introduced old Pharaoh to the Sergeant once for all,
And left 'em in the desert making friends.

It was not a Crystal Palace nor Cathedral;
It was not a public-house of common fame;
But a piece of red-hot sand, with a palm on either hand,
And a little hut for Sergeant Whatisname.

Said England unto Pharaoh, 'You've had miracles before,
When Aaron struck your rivers into blood:
But if you watch the Sergeant he can show you something more.
He 's a charm for making riflemen from mud.'
It was neither Hindustani, French, nor Coptics;
It was odds and ends and leavings of the same,
Translated by a stick (which is really half the trick),
And Pharaoh harked to Sergeant Whatisname.

(There were years that no one talked of; there were times of horrid doubt—
There was faith and hope and whacking and despair—
While the Sergeant gave the Cautions and he combed old Pharaoh out,
And England didn't seem to know nor care.
That is England's awful way o' doing business—
She would serve her God or Gordon just the same—
For she thinks her Empire still is the Strand and Holborn Hill,
And she didn't think of Sergeant Whatisname.)

Said England to the Sergeant, 'You can let my people go!'
(England used 'em cheap and nasty from the start),
And they entered 'em in battle on a most astonished foe—
But the Sergeant he had hardened Pharaoh's heart.

That was broke, along of all the plagues of Egypt,
Three thousand years before the Sergeant came—
And he mended it again in a little more than ten,
So Pharaoh fought like Sergeant Whatisname!

It was wicked bad campaigning (cheap and nasty from the first),
There was heat and dust and coolie-work and sun,
There were vipers, flies, and sandstorms, there was cholera and thirst,
But Pharaoh done the best he ever done.
Down the desert, down the railway, down the river,
Like the Israelites from bondage so he came,
'Tween the clouds o' dust and fire to the land of his desire,
And his Moses, it was Sergeant Whatisname!

We are eating dirt in handfuls for to save our daily bread,
Which we have to buy from those that hate us most,
And we must not raise the money where the Sergeant raised the dead,
And it's wrong and bad and dangerous to boast.
But he did it on the cheap and on the quiet,
And he's not allowed to forward any claim—
Though he drilled a black man white, though he made a mummy fight,
He will still continue Sergeant Whatisname—
Private, Corporal, Colour-Sergeant, and Instructor—
But the everlasting miracle's the same!

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

(Canadian Preferential Tariff, 1897)

A NATION spoke to a Nation,
A Queen sent word to a Throne:
'Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own.
The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close,
And I set my house in order,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'Neither with laughter nor weeping,
Fear or the child's amaze—
Soberly under the White Man's law
My white men go their ways.
Not for the Gentiles' clamour—
Insult or threat of blows—
Bow we the knee to Baal,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'My speech is clean and single,
I talk of common things—
Words of the wharf and the market-place
And the ware the merchant brings:

Favour to those I favour,
  But a stumbling-block to my foes.
Many there be that hate us,'
  Said our Lady of the Snows.

'I called my chiefs to council
  In the din of a troubled year;
For the sake of a sign ye would not see,
  And a word ye would not hear.
This is our message and answer:
  This is the path we chose:
For we be also a people,'
  Said our Lady of the Snows.

'Carry the word to my sisters—
  To the Queens of the East and the South.
I have proven faith in the Heritage
  By more than the word of the mouth.
They that are wise may follow
  Ere the world's war-trumpet blows:
But I—I am first in the battle,'
  Said our Lady of the Snows.

A Nation spoke to a Nation,
  A Throne sent word to a Throne:
'Daughter am I in my mother's house,
  But mistress in my own!
The gates are mine to open,
  As the gates are mine to close,
And I abide by my mother's house,'
  Said our Lady of the Snows.

'ET DONA FERENTES'

(1896)

IN extended observation of the ways and works of man,
From the Four-mile Radius roughly to the plains of Hindustan:
I have drunk with mixed assemblies, seen the racial ruction rise,
And the men of half creation damning half creation's eyes.

I have watched them in their tantrums, all that pentecostal crew,
French, Italian, Arab, Spaniard, Dutch and Greek, and Russ and Jew,
Celt and savage, buff and ochre, cream and yellow, mauve and white,
But it never really mattered till the English grew polite;

Till the men with polished toppers, till the men in long frock-coats,
Till the men that do not duel, till the men who fight with votes,
Till the breed that take their pleasures as Saint Laurence took his grid,
Began to 'beg your pardon' and—the knowing croupier hid.

Then the bandsmen with their fiddles, and the girls that bring the beer,
Felt the psychologic moment, left the lit casino clear;
But the uninstructed alien, from the Teuton to the Gaul,
Was entrapped, once more, my country, by that suave, deceptive drawl.

. . . . . .

As it was in ancient Suez or 'neath wilder, milder skies,
I 'observe with apprehension' when the racial ructions rise;
And with keener apprehension, if I read the times aright,
Hear the old casino order: 'Watch your man, but be polite.

'Keep your temper. Never answer (that was why they spat and swore).
Don't hit first, but move together (there's no hurry) to the door.
Back to back, and facing outward while the linguist tells 'em how—
"'Nous sommes allong a notre batteau, nous ne voulong pas un row."'

So the hard, pent rage ate inward, till some idiot went too far . . .
'Let 'em have it!' and they had it, and the same was serious war.
Fist, umbrella, cane, decanter, lamp and beer-mug, chair and boot—
Till behind the fleeing legions rose the long, hoarse yell for loot.

Then the oil-cloth with its numbers, as a banner fluttered free;
Then the grand piano cantered, on three castors, down the quay;
White, and breathing through their nostrils, silent, systematic, swift—
They removed, effaced, abolished all that man could heave or lift.

Oh, my country, bless the training that from cot to castle runs—
The pitfall of the stranger but the bulwark of thy sons—
Measured speech and ordered action, sluggish soul and unperturbed,
Till we wake our Island-Devil—nowise cool for being curbed!

When the heir of all the ages 'has the honour to remain,'
When he will not hear an insult, though men make it ne'er so plain,
When his lips are schooled to meekness, when his back is bowed to blows—
Well the keen aas-vogels know it—well the waiting jackal knows.

Build on the flanks of Etna where the sullen smoke-puffs float—
Or bathe in tropic waters where the lean fin dogs the boat—
Cock the gun that is not loaded; cook the frozen dynamite—
But oh, beware my country, when my country grows polite!

THE ROWERS

(1902)

THE banked oars fell an hundred strong,
And backed and threshed and ground,
But bitter was the rowers' song,
As they brought the war-boat round.

They had no heart for the rally and roar,
That makes the whale-bath smoke—
When the great blades cleave and hold and leave
As one on the racing stroke.

They sang:—'What reckoning do ye keep,
And steer her by what star,
If we come unscathed from the Southern deep,
To be wrecked on a Baltic bar?

'Last night ye swore our voyage was done,
But seaward still we go;
And ye tell us now of a secret vow
Ye have made with an open foe!

'That we must lie off a lightless coast
And haul and back and veer,
At the will of the breed that have wronged us most
For a year and a year and a year!

'There was never a shame in Christendie
They laid not to our door—
And ye say we must take the winter sea
And sail with them once more?

'Look South! The gale is scarce o'erpast
That stripped and laid us down,
When we stood forth but they stood fast
And prayed to see us drown.

'The dead they mocked are scarcely cold,
Our wounds are bleeding yet—
And ye tell us now that our strength is sold
To help them press for a debt?

''Neath all the flags of all mankind
That use upon the seas,
Was there no other fleet to find
That ye strike hands with these?

'Of evil times that men could choose
On evil fate to fall,
What brooding Judgment let ye loose
To pick the worst of all?

'In sight of peace—from the Narrow Seas
O'er half the world to run—
With a cheated crew, to league anew
With the Goth and the shameless Hun!'

KITCHENER'S SCHOOL

(1898)

Being a translation of the song that was made by a Mohammedan schoolmaster of Bengal Infantry (some time on service at Suakim) when he heard that the Sirdar was taking money from the English to build a Madrissa for Hubshees—or a college for the Sudanese.

OH Hubshee, carry your shoes in your hand and bow your head on your breast!
This is the message of Kitchener who did not break you in jest.
It was permitted to him to fulfil the long-appointed years;
Reaching the end ordained of old over your dead Emirs.

He stamped only before your walls, and the Tomb ye knew was dust.
He gathered up under his armpits all the swords of your trust.
He set a guard on your granaries, securing the weak from the strong:
He said:—'Go work the waterwheels that were abolished so long.'

He said:—'Go safely, being abased. I have accomplished my vow.'
That was the mercy of Kitchener. Cometh his madness now!

He does not desire as ye desire, nor devise as ye devise:
He is preparing a second host—an army to make you wise.

Not at the mouth of his clean-lipped guns shall ye learn
his name again,
But letter by letter, from Kaf to Kaf, at the mouth of
his chosen men.
He has gone back to his own city, not seeking presents
or bribes,
But openly asking the English for money to buy you
Hakims and scribes.

Knowing that ye are forfeit by battle and have no right
to live,
He begs for money to bring you learning—and all the
English give.
It is their treasure—it is their pleasure—thus are their
hearts inclined:
For Allah created the English mad—the maddest of all
mankind!

They do not consider the Meaning of Things; they con-
sult not creed nor clan.
Behold, they clap the slave on the back, and behold, he
ariseth a man!
They terribly carpet the earth with dead, and before
their cannon cool,
They walk unarmed by twos and threes to call the living
to school.

How is this reason (which is their reason) to judge a
scholar's worth,
By casting a ball at three straight sticks and defending
the same with a fourth?

But this they do (which is doubtless a spell) and other matters more strange,
Until, by the operation of years, the hearts of their scholars change:

Till these make come and go great boats or engines upon the rail
(But always the English watch near by to prop them when they fail);
Till these make laws of their own choice and Judges of their own blood;
And all the mad English obey the Judges and say that the Law is good.

Certainly they were mad from of old: but I think one new thing;
That the magic whereby they work their magic—wherefrom their fortunes spring—
May be that they show all peoples their magic and ask no price in return.
Wherefore, since ye are bond to that magic, O Hubshee, make haste and learn!

Certainly also is Kitchener mad. But one sure thing I know—
If he who broke you be minded to teach you, to his Madrissa go.
Go, and carry your shoes in your hand and bow your head on your breast,
For he who did not slay you in sport, he will not teach you in jest.

THE YOUNG QUEEN

(The Commonwealth of Australia, inaugurated New Year's Day, 1901)

HER hand was still on her sword-hilt, the spur was still on her heel,
She had not cast her harness of gray war-dinted steel;
High on her red-splashed charger, beautiful, bold, and browned,
Bright-eyed out of the battle, the Young Queen rode to be crowned.

She came to the Old Queen's presence, in the Hall of Our Thousand Years—
In the Hall of the Five Free Nations that are peers among their peers:
Royal she gave the greeting, loyal she bowed the head,
Crying—'Crown me, my Mother!' And the Old Queen stood and said:—

'How can I crown thee further? I know whose standard flies
Where the clean surge takes the Leeuwin or the coral barriers rise.

Blood of our foes on thy bridle, and speech of our friends
in thy mouth—
How can I crown thee further, O Queen of the Sovereign
South?

'Let the Five Free Nations witness!' But the Young
Queen answered swift:—
'It shall be crown of Our crowning to hold Our crown for
a gift.
In the days when Our folk were feeble Thy sword made
sure Our lands:
Wherefore We come in power to take Our crown at Thy
hands.'

And the Old Queen raised and kissed her, and the jeal-
ous circlet prest,
Roped with the pearls of the Northland, red with the
gold of the West,
Lit with her land's own opals, levin-hearted, alive,
And the Five-starred Cross above them, for sign of the
Nations Five.

So it was done in the Presence—in the Hall of Our
Thousand Years,
In the face of the Five Free Nations that have no peer
but their peers;
And the Young Queen out of the Southland kneeled
down at the Old Queen's knee,
And asked for a mother's blessing on the excellent years
to be.

And the Old Queen stooped in the stillness where the jewelled head drooped low:—
'Daughter no more but Sister, and doubly Daughter so—
Mother of many princes—and child of the child I bore,
What good thing shall I wish thee that I have not wished before?

'Shall I give thee delight in dominion—mere pride of thy setting forth?
Nay, we be women together—we know what that lust is worth.
Peace in thy utmost borders, and strength on a road untrod?
These are dealt or diminished at the secret will of God.

'I have swayed troublous councils, I am wise in terrible things;
Father and son and grandson, I have known the heart of the Kings.
Shall I give thee my sleepless wisdom, or the gift all wisdom above?
Ay, we be women together—I give thee thy people's love:

'Tempered, august, abiding, reluctant of prayers or vows,
Eager in face of peril as thine for thy mother's house.
God requite thee, my Sister, through the wonderful years to be,
And make thy people to love thee as thou hast loved me!'

RIMMON

(1903)

DULY with knees that feign to quake—
Bent head and shaded brow,—
Yet once again, for my father's sake,
In Rimmon's House I bow.

The curtains part, and the trumpet blares,
And the eunuchs howl aloud;
And the gilt, swag-bellied idol glares
Insolent over the crowd.

'This is Rimmon, Lord of the Earth—
Fear Him and bow the knee!'
And I watch my comrades hide their mirth
That rode to the wars with me.

For we remember the sun and the sand
And the rocks whereon we trod,
Ere we came to a scorched and a scornful land
That did not know our God;

As we remember the sacrifice
Dead men an hundred laid—
Slain while they served His mysteries
And that He would not aid.

Not though we gashed ourselves and wept,
  For the high-priest bade us wait;
Saying He went on a journey or slept,
  Or was drunk or had taken a mate.

('Praise ye Rimmon, King of Kings,
  Who ruleth Earth and Sky!'
And again I bow as the censer swings
  And the God Enthroned goes by.)

Ay, we remember His sacred ark,
  And the virtuous men that knelt
To the dark and the hush behind the dark
  Wherein we dreamed He dwelt;

Until we entered to hale Him out,
  And found no more than an old
Uncleanly image girded about
  The loins with scarlet and gold.

Him we o'erset with the butts of our spears—
  Him and his vast designs—
To be the scorn of our muleteers
  And the jest of our halted lines.

By the picket-pins that the dogs defile,
  In the dung and the dust He lay,
Till the priests ran and chattered awhile
  And wiped Him and took Him away.

Hushing the matter before it was known,
  They returned to our fathers afar,
And hastily set Him afresh on His throne
  Because He had won us the war.

Wherefore with knees that feign to quake—
  Bent head and shaded brow—
To this dead dog, for my father's sake,
  In Rimmon's House I bow.

THE OLD ISSUE

October 9, 1899

'THERE is nothing new nor aught unproven,' say the Trumpets,
'Many feet have worn it and the road is old indeed.
It is the King—the King we schooled aforetime!'
(Trumpets in the marshes—in the eyot at Runnymede!)

'Here is neither haste, nor hate, nor anger,' peal the Trumpets,
'Pardon for his penitence or pity for his fall.
It is the King!'—inexorable Trumpets—
(Trumpets round the scaffold at the dawning by Whitehall!)

. . . . . .

'He hath veiled the crown and hid the sceptre,' warn the Trumpets,
'He hath changed the fashion of the lies that cloak his will.
Hard die the Kings—ah hard—dooms hard!' declare the Trumpets,
Trumpets at the gang-plank where the brawling troop-decks fill!

THE OLD ISSUE

Ancient and Unteachable, abide—abide the Trumpets!
Once again the Trumpets, for the shuddering ground-swell brings
Clamour over ocean of the harsh pursuing Trumpets—
Trumpets of the Vanguard that have sworn no truce with Kings!

All we have of freedom, all we use or know—
This our fathers bought for us long and long ago.

Ancient Right unnoticed as the breath we draw—
Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath the Law.

Lance and torch and tumult, steel and gray-goose wing
Wrenched it, inch and ell and all, slowly from the King.

Till our fathers 'stablished, after bloody years,
How our King is one with us, first among his peers.

So they bought us freedom—not at little cost—
Wherefore must we watch the King, lest our gain be lost.

Over all things certain, this is sure indeed,
Suffer not the old King: for we know the breed.

Give no ear to bondsmen bidding us endure,
Whining 'He is weak and far'; crying 'Time shall cure.'

(Time himself is witness, till the battle joins,
Deeper strikes the rottenness in the people's loins.)

Give no heed to bondsmen masking war with peace.
Suffer not the old King here or overseas.

They that beg us barter—wait his yielding mood—
Pledge the years we hold in trust—pawn our brother's
blood—

Howso' great their clamour, whatsoe'er their claim,
Suffer not the old King under any name!

Here is naught unproven—here is naught to learn.
It is written what shall fall if the King return.

He shall mark our goings, question whence we came,
Set his guards about us, as in Freedom's name.

He shall take a tribute, toll of all our ware;
He shall change our gold for arms—arms we may not
bear.

He shall break his Judges if they cross his word;
He shall rule above the Law calling on the Lord.

He shall peep and mutter; and the night shall bring
Watchers 'neath our window, lest we mock the King—

Hate and all division; hosts of hurrying spies;
Money poured in secret, carrion breeding flies.

Strangers of his council, hirelings of his pay,
These shall deal our Justice: sell—deny—delay.

We shall drink dishonour, we shall eat abuse
For the Land we look to—for the Tongue we use.

We shall take our station, dirt beneath his feet,
While his hired captains jeer us in the street.

THE OLD ISSUE

Cruel in the shadow, crafty in the sun,
Far beyond his borders shall his teachings run.

Sloven, sullen, savage, secret, uncontrolled—
Laying on a new land evil of the old;

Long-forgotten bondage, dwarfing heart and brain—
All our fathers died to loose he shall bind again.

Here is naught at venture, random nor untrue—
Swings the wheel full-circle, brims the cup anew.

Here is naught unproven, here is nothing hid:
Step for step and word for word—so the old Kings did!

Step by step and word by word: who is ruled may read.
Suffer not the old Kings—for we know the breed—

All the right they promise—all the wrong they bring.
Stewards of the Judgment, suffer not this King!

BRIDGE-GUARD IN THE KARROO

(1901)

'and will supply details to guard the Blood River Bridge.'
District Orders—Lines of Communication.

SUDDEN the desert changes,
The raw glare softens and clings,
Till the aching Oudtshoorn ranges
Stand up like the thrones of kings—

Ramparts of slaughter and peril—
Blazing, amazing—aglow
'Twixt the sky-line's belting beryl
And the wine-dark flats below.

Royal the pageant closes,
Lit by the last of the sun—
Opal and ash-of-roses,
Cinnamon, umber, and dun.

The twilight swallows the thicket,
The starlight reveals the ridge;
The whistle shrills to the picket—
We are changing guard on the bridge.

BRIDGE-GUARD IN THE KARROO

(Few, forgotten and lonely,
Where the empty metals shine—
No, not combatants—only
Details guarding the line.)

We slip through the broken panel
Of fence by the ganger's shed;
We drop to the waterless channel
And the lean track overhead;

We stumble on refuse of rations,
The beef and the biscuit-tins;
We take our appointed stations,
And the endless night begins.

We hear the Hottentot herders
As the sheep click past to the fold—
And the click of the restless girders
As the steel contracts in the cold—

Voices of jackals calling
And, loud in the hush between,
A morsel of dry earth falling
From the flanks of the scarred ravine.

And the solemn firmament marches,
And the hosts of heaven rise
Framed through the iron arches—
Banded and barred by the ties;

Till we feel the far track humming,
And we see her headlight plain,
And we gather and wait her coming—
The wonderful north-bound train.

(Few, forgotten and lonely,
  Where the white car-windows shine—
No, not combatants—only
  Details guarding the line.)

Quick, ere the gift escape us!
  Out of the darkness we reach
For a handful of week-old papers
  And a mouthful of human speech.

And the monstrous heaven rejoices,
  And the earth allows again,
Meetings, greetings, and voices
  Of women talking with men.

So we return to our places,
  As out on the bridge she rolls;
And the darkness covers our faces,
  And the darkness re-enters our souls.

More than a little lonely
  Where the lessening tail-lights shine.
No—not combatants—only
  Details guarding the line!

THE LESSON

(1909)

LET us admit it fairly, as a business people should,
We have had no end of a lesson: it will do us no end of good.

Not on a single issue, or in one direction or twain,
But conclusively, comprehensively, and several times and again,
Were all our most holy illusions knocked higher than Gilderoy's kite.
We have had a jolly good lesson, and it serves us jolly well right!

This was not bestowed us under the trees, nor yet in the shade of a tent,
But swingingly, over eleven degrees of a bare brown continent.
From Lamberts to Delagoa Bay, and from Pietersburg to Sutherland,
Fell the phenomenal lesson we learned—with a fulness accorded no other land.

It was our fault, and our very great fault, and not the judgment of Heaven.
We made an Army in our own image, on an island nine by seven,

Which faithfully mirrored its makers' ideals, equipment,
and mental attitude—
And so we got our lesson: and we ought to accept it with
gratitude.

We have spent two hundred million pounds to prove the
fact once more,
That horses are quicker than men afoot, since two and
two make four:
And horses have four legs, and men have two legs, and
two into four goes twice,
With nothing over except our lesson—and very cheap at
the price.

For remember (this our children shall know: we are too
near for that knowledge)
Not our mere astonied camps, but Council and Creed
and College—
All the obese, unchallenged old things that stifle and
overlie us—
Have felt the effects of the lesson we got—an advantage
no money could buy us!

Then let us develop this marvellous asset which we alone
command,
And which, it may subsequently transpire, will be worth
as much as the Rand.
Let us approach this pivotal fact in a humble yet hope-
ful mood—
We have had no end of a lesson: it will do us no end of
good!

THE LESSON

It was our fault, and our very great fault—and now we must turn it to use;
We have forty million reasons for failure, but not a single excuse!
So the more we work and the less we talk the better results we shall get—
We have had an imperial lesson; it may make us an Empire yet!

THE FILES

(1903)

(The Sub-Editor speaks)

FILES—
The Files—
Office Files!
Oblige me by referring to the files.
Every question man can raise,
Every phrase of every phase
Of that question is on record in the files—
(Threshed out threadbare—fought and finished in the files.
Ere the Universe at large
Was our new-tipped arrows' targe—
Ere we rediscovered Mammon and his wiles—
Faenza, gentle reader, spent her—five-and-twentieth leader
(You will find him, and some others, in the files).
Warn all future Robert Brownings and Carlyles,
It will interest them to hunt among the files,
Where unvisited, a-cold,
Lie the crowded years of old
In that Kensal-Green of greatness called the files—
(In our newspaPere-la-Chaise the office files),
Where the dead men lay them down
Meekly sure of long renown,

And above them, sere and swift,
Packs the daily deepening drift
Of the all-recording, all-effacing files—
The obliterating, automatic files.
Count the mighty men who slung
Ink, Evangel, Sword, or Tongue
When Reform and you were young—
Made their boasts and spake according in the files—
(Hear the ghosts that wake applauding in the files!)
Trace each all-forgot career
From long primer through brevier
Unto Death, a para minion in the files
(Para minion—solid—bottom of the files). . . .
Some successful Kings and Queens adorn the files,
They were great, their views were leaded,
And their deaths were triple-headed,
So they catch the eye in running through the files
(Show as blazes in the mazes of the files);
For their 'paramours and priests,'
And their gross, jack-booted feasts,
And their epoch-marking actions see the files.
Was it Bomba fled the blue Sicilian isles?
Was it Saffi, a professor
Once of Oxford, brought redress or
Garibaldi? Who remembers
Forty-odd-year old Septembers?—
Only sextons paid to dig among the files
(Such as I am, born and bred among the files).
You must hack through much deposit
Ere you know for sure who was it
Came to burial with such honour in the files
(Only seven seasons back beneath the files).
'Very great our loss and grievous—

So our best and brightest leave us,
And it ends the Age of Giants,' say the files;
All the '60—'70—'80—'90 files
(The open-minded, opportunist files—
The easy 'O King, live for ever' files).
It is good to read a little in the files;
'Tis a sure and sovereign balm
Unto philosophic calm,
Yea, and philosophic doubt when Life beguiles.
When you know Success is Greatness,
When you marvel at your lateness
In apprehending facts so plain to Smiles
(Self-helpful, wholly strenuous Samuel Smiles).
When your Imp of Blind Desire
Bids you set the Thames afire,
You'll remember men have done so—in the files.
You'll have seen those flames transpire—in the files
(More than once that flood has run so—in the files).
When the Conchimarian horns
Of the reboantic Norns
Usher gentlemen and ladies
With new lights on Heaven and Hades,
Guaranteeing to Eternity
All yesterday's modernity;
When Brocken-spectres made by
Some one's breath on ink parade by,
Very earnest and tremendous,
Let not shows of shows offend us.
When of everything we like we
Shout ecstatic:—'Quod ubique,
Quod ab omnibus means semper!'
Oh, my brother, keep your temper!
Light your pipe and take a look along the files!

You've a better chance to guess
At the meaning of Success
(Which is Greatness—vide press)
When you've seen it in perspective in the files.

THE REFORMERS

(1901)

NOT in the camp his victory lies
Or triumph in the market-place,
Who is his Nation's sacrifice
To turn the judgment from his race.

Happy is he who, bred and taught
By sleek, sufficing Circumstance—
Whose Gospel was the apparelled thought,
Whose Gods were Luxury and Chance—

Sees, on the threshold of his days,
The old life shrivel like a scroll,
And to unheralded dismays
Submits his body and his soul;

The fatted shows wherein he stood
Foregoing, and the idiot pride,
That he may prove with his own blood
All that his easy sires denied—

Ultimate issues, primal springs,
Demands, abasements, penalties—
The imperishable plinth of things
Seen and unseen, that touch our peace.

For, though ensnaring ritual dim
  His vision through the after-years,
Yet virtue shall go out of him:
  Example profiting his peers.

With great things charged he shall not hold
  Aloof till great occasion rise,
But serve, full-harnessed, as of old,
  The days that are the destinies.

He shall forswear and put away
  The idols of his sheltered house;
And to Necessity shall pay
  Unflinching tribute of his vows.

He shall not plead another's act,
  Nor bind him in another's oath
To weigh the Word above the Fact,
  Or make or take excuse for sloth.

The yoke he bore shall press him still,
  And long-ingrained effort goad
To find, to fashion, and fulfil
  The cleaner life, the sterner code.

Not in the camp his victory lies—
  The world (unheeding his return)
Shall see it in his children's eyes
  And from his grandson's lips shall learn!

DIRGE OF DEAD SISTERS

(1902)

WHO recalls the twilight and the ranged tents in order
(Violet peaks uplifted through the crystal evening air?)
And the clink of iron teacups and the piteous, noble laughter,
And the faces of the Sisters with the dust upon their hair?

(Now and not hereafter, while the breath is in our nostrils,
Now and not hereafter, ere the meaner years go by—
Let us now remember many honourable women,
Such as bade us turn again when we were like to die.)

Who recalls the morning and the thunder through the foothills
(Tufts of fleecy shrapnel strung along the empty plains?)
And the sun-scarred Red-Cross coaches creeping guarded to the culvert,
And the faces of the Sisters looking gravely from the trains?

(When the days were torment and the nights were clouded terror,
When the Powers of Darkness had dominion on our soul—
When we fled consuming through the Seven Hells of fever,
These put out their hands to us and healed and made us whole.)

Who recalls the midnight by the bridge's wrecked abutment
(Autumn rain that rattled like a Maxim on the tin?)
And the lightning-dazzled levels and the streaming, straining wagons,
And the faces of the Sisters as they bore the wounded in?

(Till the pain was merciful and stunned us into silence—
When each nerve cried out on God that made the misused clay;
When the Body triumphed and the last poor shame departed—
These abode our agonies and wiped the sweat away.)

Who recalls the noontide and the funerals through the market
(Blanket-hidden bodies, flagless, followed by the flies?)
And the footsore firing-party, and the dust and stench and staleness,
And the faces of the Sisters and the glory in their eyes?

(Bold behind the battle, in the open camp all-hallowed,
Patient, wise, and mirthful in the ringed and reeking town,
These endured unresting till they rested from their labours—
Little wasted bodies, ah, so light to lower down!)

Yet their graves are scattered and their names are clean forgotten,
Earth shall not remember, but the Waiting Angel knows
Them that died at Uitvlugt when the plague was on the city—
Her that fell at Simon's Town in service on our foes.

Wherefore we they ransomed, while the breath is in our nostrils,
Now and not hereafter, ere the meaner years go by,
Praise with love and worship many honourable women,
Those that gave their lives for us when we were like to die!

THE ISLANDERS

(1902)

NO doubt but ye are the People—your throne is above the King's.
Whoso speaks in your presence must say acceptable things:
Bowing the head in worship, bending the knee in fear—
Bringing the word well smoothen—such as a King should hear.

Fenced by your careful fathers, ringed by your leaden seas,
Long did ye wake in quiet and long lie down at ease;
Till ye said of Strife, 'What is it?' of the Sword, 'It is far from our ken';
Till ye made a sport of your shrunken hosts and a toy of your armed men.
Ye stopped your ears to the warning—ye would neither look nor heed—
Ye set your leisure before their toil and your lusts above their need.
Because of your witless learning and your beasts of warren and chase,
Ye grudged your sons to their service and your fields for their camping-place.
Ye forced them glean in the highways the straw for the bricks they brought;

Ye forced them follow in byways the craft that ye never taught.
Ye hindered and hampered and crippled; ye thrust out of sight and away
Those that would serve you for honour and those that served you for pay.
Then were the judgments loosened; then was your shame revealed,
At the hands of a little people, few but apt in the field.
Yet ye were saved by a remnant (and your land's long-suffering Star),
When your strong men cheered in their millions while your striplings went to the war.
Sons of the sheltered city—unmade, unhandled, unmeet—
Ye pushed them raw to the battle as ye picked them raw from the street.
And what did ye look they should compass? Warcraft learned in a breath,
Knowledge unto occasion at the first far view of Death?
So! And ye train your horses and the dogs ye feed and prize?
How are the beasts more worthy than the souls your sacrifice?
But ye said, 'Their valour shall show them'; but ye said, 'The end is close.'
And ye sent them comfits and pictures to help them harry your foes,
And ye vaunted your fathomless power, and ye flaunted your iron pride,
Ere—ye fawned on the Younger Nations for the men who could shoot and ride!

Then ye returned to your trinkets; then ye contented
your souls
With the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied
oafs at the goals.
Given to strong delusion, wholly believing a lie,
Ye saw that the land lay fenceless, and ye let the months
go by
Waiting some easy wonder: hoping some saving sign—
Idle—openly idle—in the lee of the forespent Line.
Idle—except for your boasting—and what is your boast-
ing worth
If ye grudge a year of service to the lordliest life on
earth?
Ancient, effortless, ordered, cycle on cycle set,
Life so long untroubled, that ye who inherit forget
It was not made with the mountains, it is not one with
the deep.
Men, not gods, devised it. Men, not gods, must keep.
Men, not children, servants, or kinsfolk called from afar,
But each man born in the Island broke to the matter of
war.
Soberly and by custom taken and trained for the same;
Each man born in the Island entered at youth to the
game—
As it were almost cricket, not to be mastered in haste,
But after trial and labour, by temperance, living chaste.
As it were almost cricket—as it were even your play,
Weighed and pondered and worshipped, and practised
day and day.
So ye shall bide sure-guarded when the restless light-
nings wake
In the womb of the blotting war-cloud, and the pallid
nations quake.

So, at the haggard trumpets, instant your soul shall leap
Forthright, accoutred, accepting—alert from the wells of sleep.
So at the threat ye shall summon—so at the need ye shall send
Men, not children or servants, tempered and taught to the end;
Cleansed of servile panic, slow to dread or despise,
Humble because of knowledge, mighty by sacrifice.
But ye say, 'It will mar our comfort.' Ye say, 'It will minish our trade.'
Do ye wait for the spattered shrapnel ere ye learn how a gun is laid?
For the low, red glare to southward when the raided coast-towns burn?
(Light ye shall have on that lesson, but little time to learn.)
Will ye pitch some white pavilion, and lustily even the odds,
With nets and hoops and mallets, with rackets and bats and rods?
Will the rabbit war with your foemen—the red deer horn them for hire?
Your kept cock-pheasant keep you?—he is master of many a shire.
Arid, aloof, incurious, unthinking, unthanking, gelt,
Will ye loose your schools to flout them till their brow-beat columns melt?
Will ye pray them or preach them, or print them, or ballot them back from your shore?
Will your workmen issue a mandate to bid them strike no more?

Will ye rise and dethrone your rulers? (Because ye
were idle both?
Pride by insolence chastened? Indolence purged by
sloth?)
No doubt but ye are the People; who shall make you
afraid?
Also your gods are many; no doubt but your gods shall
aid.
Idols of greasy altars built for the body's ease;
Proud little brazen Baals and talking fetishes;
Teraphs of sept and party and wise wood-pavement
gods—
These shall come down to the battle and snatch you from
under the rods?
From the gusty, flickering gun-roll with viewless salvoes
rent,
And the pitted hail of the bullets that tell not whence
they were sent.
When ye are ringed as with iron, when ye are scourged
as with whips,
When the meat is yet in your belly, and the boast is
yet on your lips;
When ye go forth at morning and the noon beholds you
broke,
Ere ye lie down at even, your remnant, under the yoke.

No doubt but ye are the People—absolute, strong, and
wise;
Whatever your heart has desired ye have not withheld
from your eyes.
On your own heads, in your own hands, the sin and the
saving lies!

THE PEACE OF DIVES

(1903)

THE Word came down to Dives in Torment where he lay:
'Our World is full of wickedness, My Children maim and slay,
And the Saint and Seer and Prophet
Can make no better of it
Than to sanctify and prophesy and pray.

'Rise up, rise up, thou Dives, and take again thy gold,
And thy women and thy housen as they were to thee of old.
It may be grace hath found thee
In the furnace where We bound thee,
And that thou shalt bring the peace My Son foretold.'

Then merrily rose Dives and leaped from out his fire,
And walked abroad with diligence to do the Lord's desire;
And anon the battles ceased,
And the captives were released,
And Earth had rest from Goshen to Gadire.

The Word came down to Satan that raged and roared alone,
'Mid the shouting of the peoples by the cannon overthrown
(But the Prophets, Saints, and Seers
Set each other by the ears,
For each would claim the marvel as his own):

'Rise up, rise up, thou Satan, upon the Earth to go,
And prove the peace of Dives if it be good or no:
For all that he hath planned
We deliver to thy hand,
As thy skill shall serve to break it or bring low.'

Then mightily rose Satan, and about the Earth he hied,
And breathed on Kings in idleness and Princes drunk with pride;
But for all the wrong he breathed
There was never sword unsheathed,
And the fires he lighted flickered out and died.

Then terribly rose Satan, and he darkened Earth afar,
Till he came on cunning Dives where the money-changers are;
And he saw men pledge their gear
For the gold that buys the spear,
And the helmet and the habergeon of war.

Yea to Dives came the Persian and the Syrian and the Mede—
And their hearts were nothing altered, nor their cunning nor their greed—
And they pledged their flocks and farms
For the king-compelling arms,
And Dives lent according to their need.

Then Satan said to Dives:—'Return again with me,
Who hast broken His Commandment in the day He set thee free,
Who grindest for thy greed,
Man's belly-pinch and need;
And the blood of Man to filthy usury!'

Then softly answered Dives where the money-changers sit:—
'My refuge is Our Master, O My Master in the Pit;
But behold all Earth is laid
In the peace which I have made,
And behold I wait on thee to trouble it!'

Then angrily turned Satan, and about the Seas he fled,
To shake the new-sown peoples with insult, doubt, and dread;
But for all the sleight he used
There was never squadron loosed,
And the brands he flung flew dying and fell dead.

Yet to Dives came Atlantis and the Captains of the West—
And their hates were nothing weakened, nor their anger nor unrest—
And they pawned their utmost trade
For the dry, decreeing blade;
And Dives lent and took of them their best.

Then Satan said to Dives:—'Declare thou by The Name,
The secret of thy subtlety that turneth mine to shame.
It is known through all the Hells
How my peoples mocked my spells,
And my faithless Kings denied me ere I came.'

Then answered cunning Dives: 'Do not gold and hate abide
At the heart of every Magic, yea, and senseless fear beside?
With gold and fear and hate
I have harnessed state to state,
And with hate and fear and gold their hates are tied.

'For hate men seek a weapon, for fear they seek a shield—
Keener blades and broader targes than their frantic neighbours wield—
For gold I arm their hands,
And for gold I buy their lands,
And for gold I sell their enemies the yield.

'Their nearest foes may purchase, or their farthest friends may lease,
One by one from Ancient Accad to the Islands of the Seas.
And their covenants they make
For the naked iron's sake,
But I—I trap them armoured into peace.

'The flocks that Egypt pledged me to Assyria I drave,
And Pharaoh hath the increase of the herds that Sargon gave.
Not for Ashdod overthrown
Will the Kings destroy their own,
Or their peoples wake the strife they feign to brave.

'Is not Calno like Carchemish? For the steeds of their desire
They have sold me seven harvests that I sell to Crowning Tyre;

And the Tyrian sweeps the plains
With a thousand hired wains,
And the Cities keep the peace and—share the hire.

'Hast thou seen the pride of Moab? For the swords about his path,
His bond is to Philistia, in half of all he hath.
And he dare not draw the sword
Till Gaza give the word,
And he show release from Askalon and Gath.

'Wilt thou call again thy peoples, wilt thou craze anew thy Kings?
Lo! my lightnings pass before thee, and their whistling servant brings,
Ere the drowsy street hath stirred—
Every masked and midnight word,
And the nations break their fast upon these things.

'So I make a jest of Wonder, and a mock of Time and Space,
The roofless Seas an hostel, and the Earth a market-place,
Where the anxious traders know
Each is surety for his foe,
And none may thrive without his fellows' grace.

'Now this is all my subtlety and this is all my wit,
God give thee good enlightenment, My Master in the Pit.
But behold all Earth is laid
In the peace which I have made,
And behold I wait on thee to trouble it!'

SOUTH AFRICA

(1903)

LIVED a woman wonderful,
(May the Lord amend her!)
Neither simple, kind, nor true,
But her Pagan beauty drew
Christian gentlemen a few
Hotly to attend her.

Christian gentlemen a few
From Berwick unto Dover;
For she was South Africa,
And she was South Africa,
She was our South Africa,
Africa all over!

Half her land was dead with drouth,
Half was red with battle;
She was fenced with fire and sword,
Plague on pestilence outpoured,
Locusts on the greening sward
And murrain on the cattle!

True, ah true, and overtrue;
That is why we love her!
For she is South Africa,

And she is South Africa,
She is our South Africa,
  Africa all over!

Bitter hard her lovers toiled,
  Scandalous their payment,—
Food forgot on trains derailed;
Cattle-dung where fuel failed;
Water where the mules had staled;
  And sackcloth for their raiment!

So she filled their mouths with dust
  And their bones with fever;
Greeted them with cruel lies;
Treated them despiteful-wise;
Meted them calamities
  Till they vowed to leave her.

They took ship and they took sail,
  Raging, from her borders,—
In a little, none the less,
They forgat their sore duresse,
They forgave her waywardness
  And returned for orders!

They esteemed her favour more
  Than a Throne's foundation.
For the glory of her face
Bade farewell to breed and race—
Yea, and made their burial-place
  Altar of a Nation!

Wherefore, being bought by blood,
  And by blood restored
To the arms that nearly lost,
She, because of all she cost,
Stands, a very woman, most
  Perfect and adored!

On your feet, and let them know
  This is why we love her!
For she is South Africa,
She is our South Africa,
Is our own South Africa,
  Africa all over!

THE SETTLER

(1903)

HERE, where my fresh-turned furrows run,
And the deep soil glistens red,
I will repair the wrong that was done
To the living and the dead.
Here, where the senseless bullet fell,
And the barren shrapnel burst,
I will plant a tree, I will dig a well,
Against the heat and the thirst.

Here, in a large and a sunlit land,
Where no wrong bites to the bone,
I will lay my hand in my neighbour's hand,
And together we will atone
For the set folly and the red breach
And the black waste of it all,
Giving and taking counsel each
Over the cattle-kraal.

Here will we join against our foes—
The hailstroke and the storm,
And the red and rustling cloud that blows
The locust's mile-deep swarm;

THE SETTLER

Frost and murrain and floods let loose
  Shall launch us side by side
In the holy wars that have no truce
  'Twixt seed and harvest tide.

Earth, where we rode to slay or be slain,
  Our love shall redeem unto life;
We will gather and lead to her lips again
  The waters of ancient strife,
From the far and the fiercely guarded streams
  And the pools where we lay in wait,
Till the corn cover our evil dreams
  And the young corn our hate.

And when we bring old fights to mind,
  We will not remember the sin—
If there be blood on his head of my kind,
  Or blood on my head of his kin—
For the ungrazed upland, the untilled lea
  Cry, and the fields forlorn:
'The dead must bury their dead, but ye—
  Ye serve an host unborn.'

Bless then, our God, the new-yoked plough
  And the good beasts that draw,
And the bread we eat in the sweat of our brow
  According to Thy Law.
After us cometh a multitude—
  Prosper the work of our hands,
That we may feed with our land's food
  The folk of all our lands!

Here, in the waves and the troughs of the plains,
  Where the healing stillness lies,
And the vast, benignant sky restrains
  And the long days make wise—
Bless to our use the rain and the sun
  And the blind seed in its bed,
That we may repair the wrong that was done
  To the living and the dead!

SERVICE SONGS

(1899–1903)

TOMMY' you was when it began,
But now that it is o'er
You shall be called The Service Man
'Enceforward, evermore.

Batt'ry, brigade, flank, centre, van,
Defaulter, Army corps—
From first to last The Service Man
'Enceforward, evermore.

From 'Alifax to 'Industan,
From York to Singapore—
'Orse, foot, an' guns, The Service Man
'Enceforward, evermore!

THE ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR

WHEN you've shouted 'Rule, Britannia,' when you've sung 'God save the Queen,'
When you've finished killing Kruger—with your mouth,
Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine
For a gentleman in khaki ordered South?
He's an absent-minded beggar, and his weaknesses are great—
But we and Paul must take him as we find him!
He is out on active service, wiping something off a slate—
And he's left a lot of little things behind him!

Duke's son—cook's son—son of a hundred kings—
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!)
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after their things?)
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay—pay—pay!

There are girls he married secret, asking no permission to,
For he knew he wouldn't get it if he did,
There is gas and coal and vittles, and the house-rent falling due,
And it's more than rather likely there's a kid.

There are girls he walked with casual. They'll be sorry now he's gone,
For an absent-minded beggar they will find him,
But it ain't the time for sermons with the winter coming on,
We must help the girl that Tommy's left behind him!

Cook's son—duke's son—son of a belted earl—
Son of a Lambeth publican—it's all the same to-day!
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the girl?)
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay—pay—pay!

There are families by thousands, far too proud to beg or speak,
And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the spout,
And they'll live on half o' nothing paid 'em punctual once a week,
'Cause the man that earns the wage is ordered out.
He's an absent-minded beggar, but he heard his country call,
And his reg'ment didn't need to send to find him;
He chucked his job and joined it—so the job before us all
Is to help the home that Tommy's left behind him!

Duke's job—cook's job—gardener, baronet, groom—
Mews or palace or paper-shop, there's some one gone away!
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the room?)
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay—pay—pay!

Let us manage so as later we can look him in the face,
And tell him—what he'd very much prefer—
That, while he saved the Empire, his employer saved his place,
And his mates (that's you and me) looked out for her.
He's an absent-minded beggar, and he may forget it all,
But we do not want his kiddies to remind him
That we sent 'em to the workhouse, while their daddy hammered Paul,
So we'll help the homes our Tommy's left behind him!

Cook's home—duke's home—home of a millionaire—
(Fifty thousand foot and horse going to Table Bay!)
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and what have you got to spare?)
Pass the hat for your credit's sake and pay—pay—pay!

CHANT–PAGAN

English Irregular: '99–02

ME that 'ave been what I've been,
Me that 'ave gone where I've gone,
Me that 'ave seen what I've seen—
'Ow can I ever take on
With awful old England again,
An' 'ouses both sides of the street,
And 'edges two sides of the lane,
And the parson an' 'gentry' between,
An' touchin' my 'at when we meet—
Me that 'ave been what I've been?

Me that 'ave watched 'arf a world
'Eave up all shiny with dew,
Kopje on kop to the sun,
An' as soon as the mist let 'em through
Our 'elios winkin' like fun—
Three sides of a ninety-mile square,
Over valleys as big as a shire—
'Are ye there? Are ye there? Are ye there?'
An' then the blind drum of our fire . . .
An' I'm rollin' 'is lawns for the Squire,
Me!

Me that 'ave rode through the dark
Forty mile often on end,
Along the Ma'ollisberg Range,
With only the stars for my mark
An' only the night for my friend,
An' things runnin' off as you pass,
An' things jumpin' up in the grass,
An' the silence, the shine an' the size
Of the 'igh, inexpressible skies. . . .
I am takin' some letters almost
As much as a mile, to the post,
An' 'mind you come back with the change!'
Me!

Me that saw Barberton took
When we dropped through the clouds on their 'ead,
An' they 'ove the guns over and fled—
Me that was through Di'mond 'Ill,
An' Pieters an' Springs an' Belfast—
From Dundee to Vereeniging all!
Me that stuck out to the last
(An' five bloomin' bars on my chest)—
I am doin' my Sunday-school best,
By the 'elp of the Squire an' 'is wife
(Not to mention the 'ousemaid an' cook),
To come in an' 'ands up an' be still,
An' honestly work for my bread,
My livin' in that state of life
To which it shall please God to call
Me!

Me that 'ave followed my trade
In the place where the lightnin's are made,
'Twixt the Rains and the Sun and the Moon;
Me that lay down an' got up

Three years an' the sky for my roof—
That 'ave ridden my 'unger an' thirst
Six thousand raw mile on the hoof,
With the Vaal and the Orange for cup,
An' the Brandwater Basin for dish,—
Oh! it's 'ard to be'ave as they wish
(Too 'ard, an' a little too soon),
I'll 'ave to think over it first—
Me!

I will arise an' get 'ence;—
I will trek South and make sure
If it's only my fancy or not
That the sunshine of England is pale,
And the breezes of England are stale,
An' there's somethin' gone small with the lot;
For I know of a sun an' a wind,
An' some plains and a mountain be'ind,
An' some graves by a barb-wire fence;
An' a Dutchman I've fought 'oo might give
Me a job were I ever inclined,
To look in an' offsaddle an' live
Where there's neither a road nor a tree—
But only my Maker an' me,
And I think it will kill me or cure,
So I think I will go there an' see.

M. I.

(Mounted Infantry of the Line)

I WISH my mother could see me now, with a fence-post under my arm,
And a knife and a spoon in my putties that I found on a Boer farm,
Atop of a sore-backed Argentine, with a thirst that you couldn't buy.
I used to be in the Yorkshires once
(Sussex, Lincolns, and Rifles once),
Hampshires, Glosters, and Scottish once! (ad lib.)
But now I am M. I.

That is what we are known as—that is the name you must call
If you want officers' servants, pickets an' 'orseguards an' all—
Details for buryin'-parties, company-cooks or supply—
Turn out the chronic Ikonas! Roll up the—[1]M. I.!

My 'ands are spotty with veldt-sores, my shirt is a button an' frill,
An' the things I've used my bay'nit for would make a tinker ill!

[1]Number according to taste and service of audience.

An' I don't know whose dam' column I'm in, nor where we're trekkin' nor why.
I've trekked from the Vaal to the Orange once—
From the Vaal to the greasy Pongolo once—
(Or else it was called the Zambesi once)—
For now I am M. I.

That is what we are known as—we are the push you require
For outposts all night under freezin', an' rearguard all day under fire.
Anything 'ot or unwholesome? Anything dusty or dry?
Borrow a bunch of Ikonas! Trot out the—M. I.!

Our Sergeant-Major's a subaltern, our Captain's a Fusilier—
Our Adjutant's 'late of Somebody's 'Orse,' an' a Melbourne auctioneer;
But you couldn't spot us at 'arf a mile from the crackest caval-ry.
They used to talk about Lancers once,
Hussars, Dragoons, an' Lancers once,
'Elmets, pistols, an' carbines once,
But now we are M. I.

That is what we are known as—we are the orphans they blame
For beggin' the loan of an 'ead-stall an' makin' a mount to the same:
'Can't even look at an 'orselines but some one goes bellerin' 'Hi!
'Ere comes a burglin' Ikona!' Footsack you—M. I.!

M. I.

We're trekkin' our twenty miles a day an' bein' loved by the Dutch,
But we don't hold on by the mane no more, nor lose our stirrups—much;
An' we scout with a senior man in charge where the 'oly white flags fly.
We used to think they were friendly once,
Didn't take any precautions once
(Once, my ducky, an' only once!)
But now we are M. I.

That is what we are known as—we are the beggars that got
Three days 'to learn equitation,' an' six months o' bloomin' well trot!
Cow-guns, an' cattle, an' convoys—an' Mister De Wet on the fly—
We are the rollin' Ikonas! We are the—M. I.!

The new fat regiments come from home, imaginin' vain V. C.'s
(The same as our talky-fighty men which are often Number Threes[1]),
But our words o' command are 'Scatter' an' 'Close' an' 'Let your wounded lie.'
We used to rescue 'em noble once,—
Givin' the range as we raised 'em once,
Gettin' 'em killed as we saved 'em once—
But now we are M. I.

[1]Horse-holders when in action, and therefore generally under cover.

That is what we are known as—we are the lanterns you view
After a fight round the kopjes, lookin' for men that we knew;
Whistlin' an' callin' together, 'altin' to catch the reply:—
''Elp me! O 'elp me, Ikonas!' This way, the—M. I.!

I wish my mother could see me now, a-gatherin' news on my own,
When I ride like a General up to the scrub and ride back like Tod Sloan,
Remarkable close to my 'orse's neck to let the shots go by.
We used to fancy it risky once
(Called it a reconnaissance once),
Under the charge of an orf'cer once,
But now we are M. I.

That is what we are known as—that is the song you must say
When you want men to be Mausered at one and a penny a day;
We are no five-bob colonials—we are the 'ome-made supply,
Ask for the London Ikonas! Ring up the—M. I.!

I wish myself could talk to myself as I left 'im a year ago;
I could tell 'im a lot that would save 'im a lot on the things that 'e ought to know!
When I think o' that ignorant barrack-bird, it almost makes me cry.
I used to belong in an Army once
(Gawd! what a rum little Army once),
Red little, dead little Army once!
But now I am M. I.!

That is what we are known as—we are the men that
have been
Over a year at the business, smelt it an' felt it an' seen.
We 'ave got 'old of the needful—you will be told by and
by;
Wait till you've 'eard the Ikonas, spoke to the old M. I.!

Mount—march, Ikonas! Stand to your 'orses again!
Mop off the frost on the saddles, mop up the miles on
the plain.
Out go the stars in the dawnin', up goes our dust to the
sky,
Walk—trot, Ikonas! Trek jou,[1] the old M. I.!

[1]Get ahead.

COLUMNS

(Mobile Columns of the Later War)

OUT o' the wilderness, dusty an' dry
(Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!)
'Oo is it 'eads to the Detail Supply?
(A section, a pompom, an' six 'undred men).

'Ere comes the clerk with 'is lantern an' keys
(Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!)
'Surplus of everything—draw what you please
For the section, the pompom, an' six 'undred men.'

'What are our orders an' where do we lay?'
(Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!)
'You came after dark—you will leave before day,
You section, you pompom, an' six 'undred men!'

Down the tin street, 'alf awake an' unfed,
'Ark to 'em blessin' the Gen'ral in bed!
Now by the church an' the outspan they wind—
Over the ridge an' it's all lef' be'ind
For the section, etc.

Soon they will camp as the dawn's growin' gray,
Roll up for coffee an' sleep while they may—
The section, etc.

Read their 'ome letters, their papers an' such,
For they'll move after dark to astonish the Dutch
With a section, etc.

'Untin' for shade as the long hours pass,
Blankets on rifles or burrows in grass,
Lies the section, etc.

Dossin' or beatin' a shirt in the sun,
Watching chameleons or cleanin' a gun,
Waits the section, etc.

With nothin' but stillness as far as you please,
An' the silly mirage stringin' islands an' seas
Round the section, etc.

So they strips off their hide an' they grills in their bones,
Till the shadows crawl out from beneath the pore stones
Towards the section, etc.

An' the Mauser-bird stops an' the jackals begin,
An' the 'orse-guard comes up and the Gunners 'ook in
As a 'int to the pompom an' six 'undred men. . . .

Off through the dark with the stars to rely on—
(Alpha Centauri an' somethin' Orion)
Moves the section, etc.

Same bloomin' 'ole which the ant-bear 'as broke,
Same bloomin' stumble an' same bloomin' joke
Down the section, etc.

Same 'which is right?' where the cart-tracks divide,
Same 'give it up' from the same clever guide
To the section, etc.

Same tumble-down on the same 'idden farm,
Same white-eyed Kaffir 'oo gives the alarm
  Of the section, etc.

Same shootin' wild at the end o' the night,
Same flyin' tackle an' same messy fight
  By the section, etc.

Same ugly 'iccup an' same 'orrid squeal,
When it's too dark to see an' it's too late to feel
  In the section, etc.

(Same batch of prisoners, 'airy an' still,
Watchin' their comrades bolt over the 'ill
  From the section, etc.)

Same chilly glare in the eye of the sun
As 'e gets up displeasured to see what was done
  By the section, etc.

Same splash o' pink on the stoep or the kraal,
An' the same quiet face which 'as finished with all
  In the section, the pompom, an' six 'undred men.

Out o' the wilderness, dusty an' dry
  (Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!)
'Oo is it 'eads to the Detail Supply?
  (A section, a pompom, an' six 'undred men).

THE PARTING OF THE COLUMNS

'. . . On the —th instant a mixed detachment of colonials left—for Cape Town, there to rejoin their respective homeward-bound contingents, after fifteen months' service in the field. They were escorted to the station by the regular troops in garrison and the bulk of Colonel —'s column, which has just come in to refit, preparatory to further operations. The leave-taking was of the most cordial character, the men cheering each other continuously.'—Any Newspaper.

WE'VE rode and fought and ate and drunk as rations come to hand,
Together for a year and more around this stinkin' land:
Now you are goin' home again, but we must see it through.
We needn't tell we liked you well. Good-bye—good luck to you!

You 'ad no special call to come, and so you doubled out,
And learned us how to camp and cook an' steal a horse and scout:
Whatever game we fancied most, you joyful played it too,
And rather better on the whole. Good-bye—good luck to you!

There isn't much we 'aven't shared, since Kruger cut and run,
The same old work, the same old skoff, the same old dust and sun;
The same old chance that laid us out, or winked an' let us through;
The same old Life, the same old Death. Good-bye—good luck to you!

Our blood 'as truly mixed with yours—all down the Red Cross train,
We've bit the same thermometer in Bloemingtyphoid-tein.
We've 'ad the same old temp'rature—the same relapses too,
The same old saw-backed fever-chart. Good-bye—good luck to you!

But 'twasn't merely this an' that (which all the world may know),
'Twas how you talked an' looked at things which made us like you so.
All independent, queer an' odd, but most amazin' new,
My word! you shook us up to rights. Good-bye—good luck to you!

Think o' the stories round the fire, the tales along the trek—
O' Calgary an' Wellin'ton, an' Sydney and Quebec;
Of mine an' farm, an' ranch an' run, an' moose an' cariboo,
An' parrots peckin' lambs to death! Good-bye—good luck to you!

THE PARTING OF THE COLUMNS

We've seen you 'ome by word o' mouth, we've watched
your rivers shine,
We've 'eard your bloomin' forests blow of eucalip' and
pine;
Your young, gay countries north an' south, we feel we
own 'em too,
For they was made by rank an' file. Good-bye—good
luck to you!

We'll never read the papers now without inquirin' first
For word from all those friendly dorps where you was
born an' nursed.
Why, Dawson, Galle, an' Montreal—Port Darwin—
Timaru,
They're only just across the road! Good-bye—good
luck to you!

Good-bye!—So-long! Don't lose yourselves—nor us,
nor all kind friends,
But tell the girls your side the drift we're comin'—when
it ends!
Good-bye, you bloomin' Atlases! You've taught us
somethin' new:
The world's no bigger than a kraal. Good-bye—good
luck to you!

TWO KOPJES

(Made Yeomanry)

ONLY two African kopjes,
Only the cart-tracks that wind
Empty and open between 'em,
Only the Transvaal behind:
Only an Aldershot column
Marching to conquer the land . . .
Only a sudden and solemn
Visit, unarmed, to the Rand.

Then scorn not the African kopje,
The kopje that smiles in the heat,
The wholly unoccupied kopje,
The home of Cornelius and Piet.
You can never be sure of your kopje,
But of this be you blooming well sure,
A kopje is always a kopje,
And a Boojer is always a Boer!

Only two African kopjes,
Only the vultures above,
Only baboons—at the bottom,
Only some buck on the move;

Only a Kensington draper
  Only pretending to scout . . .
Only bad news for the paper,
  Only another knock-out.

  Then mock not the African kopje,
    And rub not your flank on its side,
  The silent and simmering kopje,
    The kopje beloved by the guide.
  You can never be, etc.

Only two African kopjes,
  Only the dust of their wheels,
Only a bolted commando,
  Only our guns at their heels . . .
Only a little barb-wire,
  Only a natural fort,
Only 'by sections retire,'
  Only 'regret to report'!

  Then mock not the African kopje,
    Especially when it is twins,
  One sharp and one table-topped kopje,
    For that's where the trouble begins.
  You never can be, etc.

Only two African kopjes
  Baited the same as before—
Only we've had it so often,
  Only we're taking no more . . .
Only a wave to our troopers,
  Only our flanks swinging past,
Only a dozen voorloopers,
  Only we've learned it at last!

Then mock not the African kopje,
But take off your hat to the same,
The patient, impartial old kopje,
The kopje that taught us the game!
For all that we knew in the Columns,
And all they've forgot on the Staff,
We learned at the fight o' Two Kopjes,
Which lasted two years an' a half.

O mock not the African kopje,
Not even when peace has been signed—
The kopje that isn't a kopje—
The kopje that copies its kind.
You can never be sure of your kopje,
But of this be you blooming well sure,
That a kopje is always a kopje,
And a Boojer is always a Boer!

THE INSTRUCTOR

(Corporals)

AT times when under cover I have said,
To keep my spirits up an' raise a laugh,
'Earin' 'im pass so busy over-'ead—
Old Nickel Neck, 'oo isn't on the Staff—
'There's one above is greater than us all.'

Before 'im I 'ave seen my Colonel fall,
An' watched 'im write my Captain's epitaph,
So that a long way off it could be read—
He 'as the knack o' makin' men feel small—
Old Whistle Tip, 'oo isn't on the Staff.

There is no sense in fleein' (I 'ave fled),
Better go on an' do the belly-crawl,
An' 'ope 'e'll 'it some other man instead
Of you 'e seems to 'unt so speshual—
Fitzy van Spitz, 'oo isn't on the Staff.

An' thus in mem'ry's gratis biograph,
Now that the show is over, I recall
The peevish voice an' 'oary mushroom 'ead
Of 'im we owned was greater than us all,
'Oo give instruction to the quick an' the dead—
The Shudderin' Beggar not upon the Staff.

BOOTS

(Infantry Columns of the Earlier War)

WE'RE foot—slog—slog—slog—sloggin' over Africa!
Foot—foot—foot—foot—sloggin' over Africa—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up and down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Seven—six—eleven—five—nine-an'-twenty mile to-day—
Four—eleven—seventeen—thirty-two the day before—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up and down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Don't—don't—don't—don't—look at what's in front of you
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again);
Men—men—men—men—men go mad with watchin' 'em,
An' there's no discharge in the war.

Try—try—try—try—to think o' something different—
Oh—my—God—keep—me from goin' lunatic!

(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war.

Count—count—count—count—the bullets in the bandoliers;
If—your—eyes—drop—they will get atop o' you
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up and down again)—
There's no discharge in the war!

We—can—stick—out—'unger, thirst, an' weariness,
But—not—not—not—not the chronic sight of 'em—
Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

'Tain't—so—bad—by—day because o' company,
But night—brings—long—strings o' forty thousand million
Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again.
There's no discharge in the war!

I—'ave—marched—six—weeks in 'Ell an' certify
It—is—not—fire—devils dark or anything
But boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again
An' there's no discharge in the war!

THE MARRIED MAN

(Reservist of the Line)

THE bachelor 'e fights for one
As joyful as can be;
But the married man don't call it fun,
Because 'e fights for three—
For 'Im an' 'Er an' It
(An' Two an' One makes Three)
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,
An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea!

The bachelor pokes up 'is 'ead
To see if you are gone;
But the married man lies down instead,
An' waits till the sights come on.
For 'Im an' 'Er an' a hit
(Direct or ricochee)
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,
An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea.

The bachelor will miss you clear
To fight another day;
But the married man, 'e says 'No fear!'
'E wants you out of the way

Of 'Im an' 'Er an' It
  (An' 'is road to 'is farm or the sea),
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,
  An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea.

The bachelor 'e fights 'is fight
  An' stretches out an' snores;
But the married man sits up all night—
  For 'e don't like out o' doors:
'E'll strain an' listen an' peer
  An' give the first alarm—
For the sake o' the breathin' 'e's used to 'ear
  An' the 'ead on the thick of 'is arm.

The bachelor may risk 'is 'ide
  To 'elp you when you're downed;
But the married man will wait beside
  Till the ambulance comes round.
'E'll take your 'ome address
  An' all you've time to say,
Or if 'e sees there's 'ope, 'e'll press
  Your art'ry 'alf the day—

For 'Im an' 'Er an' It
  (An' One from Three leaves Two),
For 'e knows you wanted to finish your bit,
  An' 'e knows 'oo's wantin' you.
Yes, 'Im an' 'Er an' It
  (Our 'oly One in Three),
We're all of us anxious to finish our bit,
  An' we want to get 'ome to our tea!

Yes, It an' 'Er an' 'Im,
  Which often makes me think
The married man must sink or swim
  An'—'e can't afford to sink!
Oh 'Im an' It an' 'Er
  Since Adam an' Eve began,
So I'd rather fight with the bachel-er
  An' be nursed by the married man!

LICHTENBERG

(N. S. W. Contingent)

SMELLS are surer than sounds or sights
To make your heart-strings crack—
They start those awful voices o' nights
That whisper, 'Old man, come back.'
That must be why the big things pass
And the little things remain,
Like the smell of the wattle by Lichtenberg,
Riding in, in the rain.

There was some silly fire on the flank
And the small wet drizzling down—
There were the sold-out shops and the bank
And the wet, wide-open town;
And we were doing escort-duty
To somebody's baggage-train,
And I smelt wattle by Lichtenberg—
Riding in, in the rain.

It was all Australia to me—
All I had found or missed:
Every face I was crazy to see,
And every woman I'd kissed:

All that I shouldn't ha' done, God knows!
(As He knows I'll do it again),
That smell of the wattle round Lichtenberg,
Riding in, in the rain!

And I saw Sydney the same as ever,
The picnics and brass-bands;
And the little homestead on Hunter River
And my new vines joining hands.
It all came over me in one act
Quick as a shot through the brain—
With the smell of the wattle round Lichtenberg,
Riding in, in the rain.

I have forgotten a hundred fights,
But one I shall not forget—
With the raindrops bunging up my sights
And my eyes bunged up with wet;
And through the crack and the stink of the cordite
(Ah Christ! My country again!)
The smell of the wattle by Lichtenberg,
Riding in, in the rain!

STELLENBOSH

(Composite Columns)

THE General 'eard the firin' on the flank,
An' 'e sent a mounted man to bring 'im back
The silly, pushin' person's name an' rank
'Oo'd dared to answer Brother Boer's attack.
For there might 'ave been a serious engagement,
An' 'e might 'ave wasted 'alf a dozen men;
So 'e ordered 'im to stop 'is operations round the kopjes,
An' 'e told 'im off before the Staff at ten!

And it all goes into the laundry,
But it never comes out in the wash,
'Ow we're sugared about by the old men
('Eavy-sterned amateur old men!)
That 'amper an' 'inder an' scold men
For fear o' Stellenbosh!

The General 'ad 'produced a great effect,'
The General 'ad the country cleared—almost;
The General ' 'ad no reason to expect,'
And the Boers 'ad us bloomin' well on toast!
For we might 'ave crossed the drift before the twilight,
Instead o' sitting down an' takin' root;
But we was not allowed, so the Boojers scooped the crowd,
To the last survivin' bandolier an' boot.

The General saw the farm'ouse in 'is rear,
With its stoep so nicely shaded from the sun;
Sez 'e, 'I'll pitch my tabernacle 'ere,'
An' 'e kept us muckin' round till 'e 'ad done.
For 'e might 'ave caught the confluent pneumonia
From sleepin' in his gaiters in the dew;
So 'e took a book an' dozed while the other columns closed,
And —'s commando out an' trickled through!

The General saw the mountain-range ahead,
With their 'elios showin' saucy on the 'eight,
So 'e 'eld us to the level ground instead,
An' telegraphed the Boojers wouldn't fight.
For 'e might 'ave gone an' sprayed 'em with a pompom,
Or 'e might 'ave slung a squadron out to see—
But 'e wasn't takin' chances in them 'igh an' 'ostile kranzes—
He was markin' time to earn a K. C. B.

The General got 'is decorations thick
(The men that backed 'is lies could not complain),
The Staff 'ad D. S. O.'s till we was sick,
An' the soldier—'ad the work to do again!
For 'e might 'ave known the District was a 'otbed,
Instead of 'andin' over, upside-down,
To a man 'oo 'ad to fight 'alf a year to put it right,
While the General went an' slandered 'im in town!

An' it all went into the laundry,
But it never came out in the wash.
We were sugared about by the old men
(Panicky, perishin' old men)
That 'amper an' 'inder an' scold men
For fear o' Stellenbosh!

HALF-BALLAD OF WATERVAL

WHEN by the labour of my 'ands
I've 'elped to pack a transport tight
With prisoners for foreign lands,
I ain't transported with delight.
I know it's only just an' right,
But yet it somehow sickens me.
For I 'ave learned at Waterval
The meanin' of captivity.

Be'ind the pegged barb-wire strands,
Beneath the tall electric light,
We used to walk in bare-'ead bands,
Explainin' 'ow we lost our fight.
An' that is what they'll do to-night
Upon the steamer out at sea,
If I 'ave learned at Waterval
The meanin' of captivity.

They'll never know the shame that brands—
Black shame no livin' down makes white,
The mockin' from the sentry-stands,
The women's laugh, the gaoler's spite.
We are too bloomin' much polite,
But that is 'ow I'd 'ave us be . . .
Since I 'ave learned at Waterval
The meanin' of captivity.

They'll get those draggin' days all right,
  Spent as a foreigner commands,
An' 'orrors of the locked-up night,
  With 'Ell's own thinkin' on their 'ands.
  I'd give the gold o' twenty Rands
    (If it was mine) to set 'em free . . .
For I 'ave learned at Waterval
    The meanin' of captivity!

PIET

(Regular of the Line)

I DO not love my Empire's foes,
Nor call 'em angels; still,
What is the sense of 'atin' those
'Oom you are paid to kill?
So, barrin' all that foreign lot
Which only joined for spite,
Myself, I'd just as soon as not
Respect the man I fight.
Ah there, Piet!—'is trousies to 'is knees,
'Is coat-tails lyin' level in the bullet-sprinkled breeze;
'E does not lose 'is rifle an' 'e does not lose 'is seat,
I've known a lot o' people ride a dam' sight worse than Piet!

I've 'eard 'im cryin' from the ground
Like Abel's blood of old,
An' skirmished out to look, an' found
The beggar nearly cold;
I've waited on till 'e was dead
(Which couldn't 'elp 'im much),
But many grateful things 'e's said
To me for doin' such.

Ah there, Piet! whose time 'as come to die,
'Is carcase past rebellion, but 'is eyes inquirin' why.
Though dressed in stolen uniform with badge o' rank complete,
I've known a lot o' fellers go a dam' sight worse than Piet.

An' when there wasn't aught to do
But camp and cattle-guards,
I've fought with 'im the 'ole day through
At fifteen 'undred yards;
Long afternoons o' lyin' still,
An' 'earin' as you lay
The bullets swish from 'ill to 'ill
Like scythes among the 'ay.
Ah there, Piet!—be'ind 'is stony kop,
With 'is Boer bread an' biltong, an' 'is flask of awful Dop;
'Is Mauser for amusement an' 'is pony for retreat,
I've known a lot o' fellers shoot a dam' sight worse than Piet.

He's shoved 'is rifle 'neath my nose
Before I'd time to think,
An' borrowed all my Sunday clo'es
An' sent me 'ome in pink;
An' I 'ave crept (Lord, 'ow I've crept!)
On 'ands an' knees I've gone,
And spoored and floored and caught and kept
An' sent him to Ceylon!

Ah there, Piet!—you've sold me many a pup,
When week on week alternate it was you an' me
''ands up!'
But though I never made you walk man-naked in
the 'eat,
I've known a lot of fellows stalk a dam' sight worse
than Piet.

From Plewman's to Marabastad,
From Ookiep to De Aar,
Me an' my trusty friend 'ave 'ad,
As you might say, a war;
But seein' what both parties done
Before 'e owned defeat,
I ain't more proud of 'avin' won,
Than I am pleased with Piet.
Ah there, Piet!—picked up be'ind the drive!
The wonder wasn't 'ow 'e fought, but 'ow 'e kep'
alive,
With nothin' in 'is belly, on 'is back, or to 'is feet—
I've known a lot o' men behave a dam' sight worse
than Piet.

No more I'll 'ear 'is rifle crack
Along the block'ouse fence—
The beggar's on the peaceful tack,
Regardless of expense.
For countin' what 'e eats an' draws,
An' gifts an' loans as well,
'E's gettin' 'alf the Earth, because
'E didn't give us 'Ell!

Ah there, Piet! with your brand-new English plough,
Your gratis tents an' cattle, an' your most ungrateful frow.
You've made the British taxpayer rebuild your country-seat—
I've known some pet battalions charge a dam' sight less than Piet.

'WILFUL-MISSING'

THERE is a world outside the one you know,
To which for curiousness 'Ell can't compare-
It is the place where 'wilful-missings' go,
As we can testify, for we are there.

You may 'ave read a bullet laid us low,
That we was gathered in 'with reverent care'
And buried proper. But it was not so,
As we can testify, for we are there.

They can't be certain—faces alter so
After the old aasvogel's 'ad 'is share;
The uniform's the mark by which they go—
And—ain't it odd?—the one we best can spare.

We might 'ave seen our chance to cut the show—
Name, number, record, an' begin elsewhere—
Leavin' some not too late-lamented foe
One funeral—private—British—for 'is share.

We may 'ave took it yonder in the Low
Bush-veldt that sends men stragglin' unaware
Among the Kaffirs, till their columns go,
An' they are left past call or count or care.

We might 'ave been your lovers long ago,
'Usbands or children—comfort or despair.
Our death (an' burial) settles all we owe,
An' why we done it is our own affair.

Marry again, and we will not say no,
Nor come to bastardise the kids you bear;
Wait on in 'ope—you've all your life below
Before you'll ever 'ear us on the stair.

There is no need to give our reasons, though
Gawd knows we all 'ad reasons which were fair;
But other people might not judge 'em so,
And now it doesn't matter what they were.

What man can size or weigh another's woe?
There are some things too bitter 'ard to bear.
Suffice it we 'ave finished—Domino!
As we can testify, for we are there,
In the side-world where 'wilful-missings' go.

UBIQUE

THERE is a word you often see, pronounce it as you may—
'You bike,' 'you bykwe,' 'ubbikwe'—alludin' to R. A.
It serves 'Orse, Field, an' Garrison as motto for a crest,
An' when you've found out all it means I'll tell you 'alf the rest.

Ubique means the long-range Krupp be'ind the low-range 'ill—
Ubique means you'll pick it up an' while you do stand still.
Ubique means you've caught the flash an' timed it by the sound.
Ubique means five gunners' 'ash before you've loosed a round.

Ubique means Blue Fuse, an' make the 'ole to sink the trail.
Ubique means stand up an' take the Mauser's 'alf-mile 'ail.
Ubique means the crazy team not God nor man can 'old.
Ubique means that 'orse's scream which turns your innards cold!

Ubique means 'Bank, 'Olborn, Bank—a penny all the way'—
The soothin', jingle-bump-an'-clank from day to peaceful day.

Ubique means 'They've caught De Wet, an' now we
shan't be long.'
Ubique means 'I much regret, the beggar's goin' strong!'

Ubique means the tearin' drift where, breech-blocks
jammed with mud,
The khaki muzzles duck an' lift across the khaki flood.
Ubique means the dancing plain that changes rocks to
Boers.
Ubique means mirage again an' shellin' all out-doors.

Ubique means 'Entrain at once for Grootdefeatfontein'!
Ubique means 'Off-load your guns'—at midnight in the
rain!
Ubique means 'More mounted men. Return all guns
to store.'
Ubique means the R. A. M. R. Infantillery Corps!

Ubique means that warnin' grunt the perished linesman
knows,
When o'er 'is strung an' sufferin' front the shrapnel
sprays 'is foes;
An' as their firin' dies away the 'usky whisper runs
From lips that 'aven't drunk all day: 'The Guns, Thank
Gawd, the Guns!'

Extreme, depressed, point-blank or short, end-first or
any'ow,
From Colesberg Kop to Quagga's Poort—from Ninety-
Nine till now—
By what I've 'eard the others tell an' I in spots 'ave
seen,
There's nothin' this side 'Eaven or 'Ell Ubique doesn't
mean!

THE RETURN

(All Arms)

PEACE is declared, an' I return
To 'Ackneystadt, but not the same;
Things 'ave transpired which made me learn
The size and meanin' of the game.
I did no more than others did,
I don't know where the change began;
I started as a average kid,
I finished as a thinkin' man.

If England was what England seems,
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!

Before my gappin' mouth could speak
I 'eard it in my comrade's tone;
I saw it on my neighbour's cheek
Before I felt it flush my own.
An' last it come to me—not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,
  Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,
Mountains that never let you near,
  An' stars to all eternity;
An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills
  The 'ollows of the wilderness,
When the wind worries through the 'ills—
  These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Towns without people, ten times took,
  An' ten times left an' burned at last;
An' starvin' dogs that come to look
  For owners when a column passed;
An' quiet, 'omesick talks between
  Men, met by night, you never knew
Until—'is face—by shellfire seen—
  Once—an' struck off. They taught me too.

The day's lay-out—the mornin' sun
  Beneath your 'at-brim as you sight;
The dinner-'ush from noon till one,
  An' the full roar that lasts till night;
An' the pore dead that look so old
  An' was so young an hour ago,
An' legs tied down before they're cold—
  These are the things which make you know.

Also Time runnin' into years—
  A thousand Places left be'ind—
An' Men from both two 'emispheres
  Discussin' things of every kind;

So much more near than I 'ad known,
  So much more great than I 'ad guessed—
An' me, like all the rest, alone—
  But reachin' out to all the rest!

So 'ath it come to me—not pride,
  Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
  The makin's of a bloomin' soul.
But now, discharged, I fall away
  To do with little things again. . . .
Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
  Look after me in Thamesfontein!

If England was what England seems,
  An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
  'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!

RECESSIONAL

(1897)

GOD of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,

Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

Amen.

THE SEVEN SEAS

DEDICATION

To the City of Bombay

(1896)

THE Cities are full of pride,
Challenging each to each—
This from her mountain-side,
That from her burthened beach.

They count their ships full tale—
Their corn and oil and wine,
Derrick and loom and bale,
And rampart's gun-flecked line;
City by City they hail:
'Hast aught to match with mine?'

And the men that breed from them
They traffic up and down,
But cling to their cities' hem
As a child to the mother's gown.

When they talk with the stranger bands,
Dazed and newly alone;
When they walk in the stranger lands,
By roaring streets unknown;
Blessing her where she stands
For strength above their own.

(On high to hold her fame
  That stands all fame beyond,
By oath to back the same,
  Most faithful-foolish-fond;
Making her mere-breathed name
  Their bond upon their bond.)

So thank I God my birth
  Fell not in isles aside—
Waste headlands of the earth,
  Or warring tribes untried—
But that she lent me worth
  And gave me right to pride.

Surely in toil or fray
  Under an alien sky,
Comfort it is to say:
  'Of no mean city am I!'

(Neither by service nor fee
  Come I to mine estate—
Mother of Cities to me,
  For I was born in her gate,
Between the palms and the sea,
  Where the world-end steamers wait.)

Now for this debt I owe,
  And for her far-borne cheer
Must I make haste and go
  With tribute to her pier.

And she shall touch and remit
  After the use of kings
(Orderly, ancient, fit)
  My deep-sea plunderings,
And purchase in all lands.
  And this we do for a sign
  Her power is over mine,
And mine I hold at her hands!

A SONG OF THE ENGLISH

(1893)

FAIR is our lot—O goodly is our heritage!
(Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!)
For the Lord our God Most High
He hath made the deep as dry,
He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the Earth!

Yea, though we sinned—and our rulers went from righteousness—
Deep in all dishonour though we stained our garments' hem.
Oh be ye not dismayed,
Though we stumbled and we strayed,
We were led by evil counsellors—the Lord shall deal with them!

Hold ye the Faith—the Faith our Fathers sealed us;
Whoring not with visions—overwise and overstale.
Except ye pay the Lord
Single heart and single sword,
Of your children in their bondage shall He ask them treble-tale!

A SONG OF THE ENGLISH

Keep ye the Law—be swift in all obedience—
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.
Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown;
By the peace among Our peoples let men know we serve the Lord!

. . . . . .

Hear now a song—a song of broken interludes—
A song of little cunning; of a singer nothing worth.
Through the naked words and mean
May ye see the truth between
As the singer knew and touched it in the ends of all the Earth!

THE COASTWISE LIGHTS

Our brows are bound with spindrift and the weed is on our knees;
Our loins are battered 'neath us by the swinging, smoking seas.
From reef and rock and skerry—over headland, ness, and voe—
The Coastwise Lights of England watch the ships of England go!

Through the endless summer evenings, on the lineless, level floors;
Through the yelling Channel tempest when the siren hoots and roars—
By day the dipping house-flag and by night the rocket's trail—
As the sheep that graze behind us so we know them where they hail.

We bridge across the dark and bid the helmsman have
a care,
The flash that wheeling inland wakes his sleeping wife
to prayer;
From our vexed eyries, head to gale, we bind in burning
chains
The lover from the sea-rim drawn—his love in English
lanes.

We greet the clippers wing-and-wing that race the
Southern wool;
We warn the crawling cargo-tanks of Bremen, Leith,
and Hull;
To each and all our equal lamp at peril of the sea—
The white wall-sided warships or the whalers of Dundee!

Come up, come in from Eastward, from the guard-ports
of the Morn!
Beat up, beat in from Southerly, O gipsies of the Horn!
Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave us, main
to main,
The Coastwise Lights of England give you welcome
back again!

Go, get you gone up-Channel with the sea-crust on your
plates;
Go, get you into London with the burden of your
freights!
Haste, for they talk of Empire there, and say, if any
seek,
The Lights of England sent you and by silence shall ye
speak!

THE SONG OF THE DEAD

Hear now the Song of the Dead—in the North by the torn berg-edges—
They that look still to the Pole, asleep by their hide-stripped sledges.
Song of the Dead in the South—in the sun by their skeleton horses,
Where the warrigal whimpers and bays through the dust of the sere river-courses.
Song of the Dead in the East—in the heat-rotted jungle hollows,
Where the dog-ape barks in the kloof—in the brake of the buffalo-wallows.
Song of the Dead in the West—in the Barrens, the waste that betrayed them,
Where the wolverine tumbles their packs from the camp and the grave-mound they made them;
Hear now the Song of the Dead!

I

We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled town;
We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go down.
Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power with the Need,
Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead.
As the deer breaks—as the steer breaks—from the herd where they graze,
In the faith of little children we went on our ways.

Then the wood failed—then the food failed—then the last water dried—
In the faith of little children we lay down and died.
On the sand-drift—on the veldt-side—in the fern-scrub we lay,
That our sons might follow after by the bones on the way.
Follow after—follow after! We have watered the root,
And the bud has come to blossom that ripens for fruit!
Follow after—we are waiting, by the trails that we lost,
For the sounds of many footsteps, for the tread of a host.
Follow after—follow after—for the harvest is sown:
By the bones about the wayside ye shall come to your own!

When Drake went down to the Horn
And England was crowned thereby,
'Twixt seas unsailed and shores unhailed
Our Lodge—our Lodge was born
(And England was crowned thereby!)

Which never shall close again
By day nor yet by night,
While man shall take his life to stake
At risk of shoal or main
(By day nor yet by night)

But standeth even so
As now we witness here,
While men depart, of joyful heart,
Adventure for to know
(As now bear witness here!)

II

We have fed our sea for a thousand years
  And she calls us, still unfed,
Though there's never a wave of all her waves
  But marks our English dead:
We have strawed our best to the weed's unrest,
  To the shark and the sheering gull.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
  Lord God, we ha' paid in full!

There's never a flood goes shoreward now
  But lifts a keel we manned;
There's never an ebb goes seaward now
  But drops our dead on the sand—
But slinks our dead on the sands forlore,
  From the Ducies to the Swin.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
  Lord God, we ha' paid it in!

We must feed our sea for a thousand years,
  For that is our doom and pride,
As it was when they sailed with the 'Golden Hind,'
  Or the wreck that struck last tide—
Or the wreck that lies on the spouting reef
  Where the ghastly blue-lights flare.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
  Lord God, we ha' bought it fair!

THE DEEP-SEA CABLES

The wrecks dissolve above us; their dust drops down from afar—
Down to the dark, to the utter dark, where the blind white sea-snakes are.
There is no sound, no echo of sound, in the deserts of the deep,
Or the great gray level plains of ooze where the shell-burred cables creep.

Here in the womb of the world—here on the tie-ribs of earth
Words, and the words of men, flicker and flutter and beat—
Warning, sorrow and gain, salutation and mirth—
For a Power troubles the Still that has neither voice nor feet.

They have wakened the timeless Things; they have killed their father Time;
Joining hands in the gloom, a league from the last of the sun.
Hush! Men talk to-day o'er the waste of the ultimate slime,
And a new Word runs between: whispering, 'Let us be one!'

THE SONG OF THE SONS

One from the ends of the earth—gifts at an open door—
Treason has much, but we, Mother, thy sons have more!
From the whine of a dying man, from the snarl of a wolf-pack freed,

Turn, and the world is thine. Mother, be proud of thy seed!
Count, are we feeble or few? Hear, is our speech so rude?
Look, are we poor in the land? Judge, are we men of The Blood?

Those that have stayed at thy knees, Mother, go call them in—
We that were bred overseas wait and would speak with our kin.
Not in the dark do we fight—haggle and flout and gibe;
Selling our love for a price, loaning our hearts for a bribe.
Gifts have we only to-day—Love without promise or fee—
Hear, for thy children speak, from the uttermost parts of the sea!

THE SONG OF THE CITIES

Bombay

Royal and Dower-royal, I the Queen
Fronting thy richest sea with richer hands—
A thousand mills roar through me where I glean
All races from all lands.

Calcutta

Me the Sea-captain loved, the River built,
Wealth sought and Kings adventured life to hold.
Hail, England! I am Asia—Power on silt,
Death in my hands, but Gold!

Madras

Clive kissed me on the mouth and eyes and brow,
Wonderful kisses, so that I became

Crowned above Queens—a withered beldame now,
Brooding on ancient fame.

Rangoon

Hail, Mother! Do they call me rich in trade?
Little care I, but hear the shorn priest drone,
And watch my silk-clad lovers, man by maid,
Laugh 'neath my Shwe Dagon.

Singapore

Hail, Mother! East and West must seek my aid
Ere the spent gear may dare the ports afar.
The second doorway of the wide world's trade
Is mine to loose or bar.

Hong-Kong

Hail, Mother! Hold me fast; my Praya sleeps
Under innumerable keels to-day.
Yet guard (and landward), or to-morrow sweeps
Thy warships down the bay!

Halifax

Into the mist my guardian prows put forth,
Behind the mist my virgin ramparts lie,
The Warden of the Honour of the North,
Sleepless and veiled am I!

Quebec and Montreal

Peace is our portion. Yet a whisper rose,
Foolish and causeless, half in jest, half hate.
Now wake we and remember mighty blows,
And, fearing no man, wait!

A SONG OF THE ENGLISH

Victoria

From East to West the circling word has passed,
Till West is East beside our land-locked blue;
From East to West the tested chain holds fast,
The well-forged link rings true!

Capetown

Hail! Snatched and bartered oft from hand to hand,
I dream my dream, by rock and heath and pine,
Of Empire to the northward. Ay, one land
From Lion's Head to Line!

Melbourne

Greeting! Nor fear nor favour won us place,
Got between greed of gold and dread of drouth,
Loud-voiced and reckless as the wild tide-race
That whips our harbour-mouth!

Sydney

Greeting! My birth-stain have I turned to good;
Forcing strong wills perverse to steadfastness:
The first flush of the tropics in my blood,
And at my feet Success!

Brisbane

The northern stirp beneath the southern skies—
I build a Nation for an Empire's need,
Suffer a little, and my land shall rise,
Queen over lands indeed!

Hobart

Man's love first found me; man's hate made me Hell;
For my babes' sake I cleansed those infamies.

Earnest for leave to live and labour well,
God flung me peace and ease.

Auckland

Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart—
On us, on us the unswerving season smiles,
Who wonder 'mid our fern why men depart
To seek the Happy Isles!

ENGLAND'S ANSWER

Truly ye come of The Blood; slower to bless than to ban;
Little used to lie down at the bidding of any man.
Flesh of the flesh that I bred, bone of the bone that I bare;
Stark as your sons shall be—stern as your fathers were.
Deeper than speech our love, stronger than life our tether,
But we do not fall on the neck nor kiss when we come together.
My arm is nothing weak, my strength is not gone by;
Sons, I have borne many sons, but my dugs are not dry.
Look, I have made ye a place and opened wide the doors,
That ye may talk together, your Barons and Councillors—
Wards of the Outer March, Lords of the Lower Seas,
Ay, talk to your gray mother that bore you on her knees!—
That ye may talk together, brother to brother's face—
Thus for the good of your peoples—thus for the Pride of the Race.
Also, we will make promise. So long as The Blood endures,

I shall know that your good is mine: ye shall feel that
my strength is yours:
In the day of Armageddon, at the last great fight of all,
That Our House stand together and the pillars do not
fall.
Draw now the threefold knot firm on the ninefold bands,
And the Law that ye make shall be law after the rule of
your lands.
This for the waxen Heath, and that for the Wattle-
bloom,
This for the Maple-leaf, and that for the southern
Broom.
The Law that ye make shall be law and I do not press
my will,
Because ye are Sons of The Blood and call me Mother
still.
Now must ye speak to your kinsmen and they must
speak to you,
After the use of the English, in straight-flung words and
few.
Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,
Baulking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.
Stand to your work and be wise—certain of sword and
pen,
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world
of men!

THE FIRST CHANTEY

(1896)

MINE was the woman to me, darkling I found her:
Haling her dumb from the camp, held her and bound her.
Hot rose her tribe on our track ere I had proved her;
Hearing her laugh in the gloom, greatly I loved her.

Swift through the forest we ran; none stood to guard us,
Few were my people and far; then the flood barred us—
Him we call Son of the Sea, sullen and swollen.
Panting we waited the death, stealer and stolen.

Yet ere they came to my lance laid for the slaughter,
Lightly she leaped to a log lapped in the water;
Holding on high and apart skins that arrayed her,
Called she the God of the Wind that He should aid her.

Life had the tree at that word (Praise we the Giver!)
Otter-like left he the bank for the full river.
Far fell their axes behind, flashing and ringing,
Wonder was on me and fear—yet she was singing!

Low lay the land we had left. Now the blue bound us,
Even the Floor of the Gods level around us.
Whisper there was not, nor word, shadow nor showing,
Till the light stirred on the deep, glowing and growing.

Then did He leap to His place flaring from under,
He the Compeller, the Sun, bared to our wonder.
Nay, not a league from our eyes blinded with gazing,
Cleared He the gate of the world, huge and amazing!

This we beheld (and we live)—the Pit of the Burning!
Then the God spoke to the tree for our returning;
Back to the beach of our flight, fearless and slowly,
Back to our slayers went he: but we were holy.

Men that were hot in that hunt, women that followed,
Babes that were promised our bones, trembled and wallowed:
Over the necks of the Tribe crouching and fawning—
Prophet and priestess we came back from the dawning!

THE LAST CHANTEY

(1892)

'And there was no more sea'

THUS said the Lord in the Vault above the Cherubim,
Calling to the Angels and the Souls in their degree:
'Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment Day.
That Our word may be established shall We gather up the sea?'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
'Plague upon the hurricane that made us furl and flee!
But the war is done between us,
In the deep the Lord hath seen us—
Our bones we'll leave the barracout', and God may sink the sea!'

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayed Him:
'Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy covenant with me?
How once a year I go
To cool me on the floe?
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take away the sea!'

Then said the soul of the Angel of the Off-shore Wind:
(He that bits the thunder when the bull-mouthed breakers flee):
'I have watch and ward to keep
O'er Thy wonders on the deep,
And Ye take mine honour from me if Ye take away the sea!'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
'Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty folk are we!
If we worked the ship together
Till she foundered in foul weather,
Are we babes that we should clamour for a vengeance on the sea?'

Then said the souls of the slaves that men threw overboard:
'Kennelled in the picaroon a weary band were we;
But Thy arm was strong to save,
And it touched us on the wave,
And we drowsed the long tides idle till Thy Trumpets tore the sea.'

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God:
'Once we frapped a ship, and she laboured woundily.
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under Malta by the sea!'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked unhandily:

'Our thumbs are rough and tarred,
And the tune is something hard—
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey such as seamen use at sea?'

Then said the souls of the gentlemen-adventurers—
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniquity:
'Ho, we revel in our chains
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's;
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we were masters of the sea!'

Up spake the soul of a gray Gothavn 'speckshioner—
(He that led the flinching in the fleets of fair Dundee):
'Oh, the ice-blink white and near,
And the bowhead breaching clear!
Will Ye whelm them all for wantonness that wallow in the sea?'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Crying: 'Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lee!
Must we sing for evermore
On the windless, glassy floor?
Take back your golden fiddles and we'll beat to open sea!'

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the good sea up to Him,
And 'stablished his borders unto all eternity,
That such as have no pleasure
For to praise the Lord by measure,
They may enter into galleons and serve Him on the sea.

Sun, wind, and cloud shall fail not from the face of it,
Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the fulmar flying free;
And the ships shall go abroad
To the Glory of the Lord
Who heard the silly sailor-folk and gave them back
their sea

THE MERCHANTMEN

(1893)

KING SOLOMON drew merchentmen,
Because of his desire
For peacocks, apes, and ivory,
From Tarshish unto Tyre:
With cedars out of Lebanon
Which Hiram rafted down,
But we be only sailormen
That use in London town.

Coastwise—cross-seas—round the world and back again—
Where the flaw shall head us or the full Trade suits—
Plain-sail—storm-sail—lay your board and tack again—
And that's the way we'll pay Paddy Doyle for his boots!

We bring no store of ingots,
Of spice or precious stones,
But that we have we gathered
With sweat and aching bones:
In flame beneath the tropics,
In frost upon the floe,
And jeopardy of every wind
That does between them go.

And some we got by purchase,
  And some we had by trade,
And some we found by courtesy
  Of pike and carronade—
At midnight, 'mid-sea meetings,
  For charity to keep,
And light the rolling homeward-bound
  That rode a foot too deep.

By sport of bitter weather
  We're walty, strained, and scarred
From the kentledge on the kelson
  To the slings upon the yard.
Six oceans had their will of us
  To carry all away—
Our galley's in the Baltic,
  And our boom's in Mossel Bay!

We've floundered off the Texel,
  Awash with sodden deals,
We've slipped from Valparaiso
  With the Norther at our heels:
We've ratched beyond the Crossets
  That tusk the Southern Pole,
And dipped our gunnels under
  To the dread Agulhas roll.

Beyond all outer charting
  We sailed where none have sailed,
And saw the land-lights burning
  On islands none have hailed;

Our hair stood up for wonder,
  But, when the night was done,
There danced the deep to windward
  Blue-empty 'neath the sun!

Strange consorts rode beside us
  And brought us evil luck;
The witch-fire climbed our channels,
  And flared on vane and truck;
Till, through the red tornado,
  That lashed us nigh to blind,
We saw The Dutchman plunging,
  Full canvas, head to wind!

We've heard the Midnight Leadsman
  That calls the black deep down—
Ay, thrice we've heard The Swimmer,
  The Thing that may not drown.
On frozen bunt and gasket
  The sleet-cloud drave her hosts,
When, manned by more than signed with us,
  We passed the Isle o' Ghosts!

And north, amid the hummocks,
  A biscuit-toss below,
We met the silent shallop
  That frighted whalers know;
For, down a cruel ice-lane,
  That opened as he sped,
We saw dead Henry Hudson
  Steer, North by West, his dead.

So dealt God's waters with us
  Beneath the roaring skies,
So walked His signs and marvels
  All naked to our eyes:
But we were heading homeward
  With trade to lose or make—
Good Lord, they slipped behind us
  In the tailing of our wake!

Let go, let go the anchors;
  Now shamed at heart are we
To bring so poor a cargo home
  That had for gift the sea!
Let go the great bow-anchors—
  Ah, fools were we and blind—
The worst we stored with utter toil,
  The best we left behind!

Coastwise—cross-seas—round the world and back again,
  Whither flaw shall fail us or the Trades drive down:
Plain-sail—storm-sail—lay your board and tack again—
  And all to bring a cargo up to London Town!

M'ANDREW'S HYMN

(1893)

LORD, Thou hast made this world below the shadow of a dream,
An', taught by time, I tak' it so—exceptin' always Steam.
From coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy Hand, O God—
Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.
John Calvin might ha' forged the same—enorrmous, certain, slow—
Ay, wrought it in the furnace-flame—my 'Institutio.'
I cannot get my sleep to-night; old bones are hard to please;
I'll stand the middle watch up here—alone wi' God an' these
My engines, after ninety days o' race an' rack an' strain
Through all the seas of all Thy world, slam-bangin' home again.
Slam-bang too much—they knock a wee—the crosshead-gibs are loose;
But thirty thousand mile o' sea has gied them fair excuse. . . .
Fine, clear an' dark—a full-draught breeze, wi' Ushant out o' sight,
An' Ferguson relievin' Hay. Old girl, ye'll walk to-night!

His wife's at Plymouth. . . . Seventy—One—Two
—Three since he began—
Three turns for Mistress Ferguson. . . . and who's
to blame the man?
There's none at any port for me, by drivin' fast or slow,
Since Elsie Campbell went to Thee, Lord, thirty years ago.
(The year the 'Sarah Sands' was burned. Oh roads we
used to tread,
Fra' Maryhill to Pollokshaws—fra'Govan to Parkhead!)
Not but they're ceevil on the Board. Ye'll hear Sir
Kenneth say:
'Good morrn, M'Andrew! Back again? An' how's
your bilge to-day?'
Miscallin' technicalities but handin' me my chair
To drink Madeira wi' three Earls—the auld Fleet En-
gineer,
That started as a boiler-whelp—when steam and he
were low.
I mind the time we used to serve a broken pipe wi' tow.
Ten pound was all the pressure then—Eh! Eh!—a
man wad drive;
An' here, our workin' gauges give one hunder fifty-five!
We're creepin' on wi' each new rig—less weight an'
larger power:
There'll be the loco-boiler next an' thirty knots an hour!
Thirty an' more. What I ha' seen since ocean-steam
began
Leaves me no doot for the machine: but what about the
man?
The man that counts, wi' all his runs, one million mile
o' sea:
Four time the span from earth to moon. . . . How
far, O Lord, from Thee?

That wast beside him night an' day. Ye mind my first typhoon?
It scoughed the skipper on his way to jock wi' the saloon.
Three feet were on the stokehold-floor—just slappin' to an' fro—
An' cast me on a furnace-door. I have the marks to show.
Marks! I ha' marks o' more than burns—deep in my soul an' black,
An' times like this, when things go smooth, my wickudness comes back.
The sins o' four-and-forty years, all up an' down the seas,
Clack an' repeat like valves half-fed. . . . Forgie's our trespasses.
Nights when I'd come on deck to mark, wi' envy in my gaze,
The couples kittlin' in the dark between the funnel stays;
Years when I raked the ports wi' pride to fill my cup o' wrong—
Judge not, O Lord, my steps aside at Gay Street in Hong-Kong!
Blot out the wastrel hours of mine in sin when I abode—
Jane Harrigan's an' Number Nine, The Reddick an' Grant Road!
An' waur than all—my crownin' sin—rank blasphemy an' wild.
I was not four-and-twenty then—Ye wadna judge a child?
I'd seen the Tropics first that run—new fruit, new smells, new air—
How could I tell—blind-fou wi' sun—the Deil was lurkin' there?

By day like playhouse-scenes the shore slid past our
sleepy eyes;
By night those soft, lasceevious stars leered from those
velvet skies,
In port (we used no cargo-steam) I'd daunder down the
streets—
An ijjit grinnin' in a dream—for shells an' parrakeets,
An' walkin'-sticks o' carved bamboo an' blowfish stuffed
an' dried—
Fillin' my bunk wi' rubbishry the Chief put overside.
Till, off Sambawa Head, Ye mind, I heard a land-breeze ca',
Milk-warm wi' breath o' spice an' bloom: 'M'Andrew,
come awa'!'
Firm, clear an' low—no haste, no hate—the ghostly
whisper went,
Just statin' eevidential facts beyon' all argument:
'Your mither's God's a graspin' deil, the shadow o'
yoursel',
Got out o' books by meenisters clean daft on Heaven an'
Hell.
They mak' him in the Broomielaw, o' Glasgie cold an' dirt,
A jealous, pridefu' fetich, lad, that's only strong to hurt.
Ye'll not go back to Him again an' kiss His red-hot rod,
But come wi' Us' (Now, who were They?) 'an' know the
Leevin' God,
That does not kipper souls for sport or break a life in
jest,
But swells the ripenin' cocoanuts an' ripes the woman's
breast.'
An' there it stopped: cut off: no more; that quiet, cer-
tain voice—
For me, six months o' twenty-four, to leave or take at
choice.

'Twas on me like a thunderclap—it racked me through
an' through—
Temptation past the show o' speech, unnameable an'
new—
The Sin against the Holy Ghost? . . . An' under
all, our screw.
That storm blew by but left behind her anchor-shiftin'
swell,
Thou knowest all my heart an' mind, Thou knowest,
Lord, I fell.
Third on the 'Mary Gloster' then, and first that night
in Hell!
Yet was Thy hand beneath my head, about my feet Thy
care—
Fra' Deli clear to Torres Strait, the trial o' despair,
But when we touched the Barrier Reef Thy answer to
my prayer!
We dared not run that sea by night but lay an' held our fire,
An' I was drowsin' on the hatch—sick—sick wi' doubt
an' tire:
'Better the sight of eyes that see than wanderin' o' desire!'
Ye mind that word? Clear as our gongs—again, an'
once again,
When rippin' down through coral-trash ran out our
moorin'-chain;
An' by Thy Grace I had the Light to see my duty plain.
Light on the engine-room—no more—bright as our car-
bons burn.
I've lost it since a thousand times, but never past return.
. . . . . .
Obsairve. Per annum we'll have here two thousand
souls aboard—
Think not I dare to justify myself before the Lord,

But—average fifteen hunder souls safe-borne fra' port
to port—
I am o' service to my kind. Ye wadna blame the
thought?
Maybe they steam from grace to wrath—to sin by folly
led,—
It isna mine to judge their path—their lives are on my
head.
Mine at the last—when all is done it all comes back to
me,
The fault that leaves six thousand ton a log upon the sea.
We'll tak' one stretch—three weeks an' odd by any road
ye steer—
Fra' Cape Town east to Wellington—ye need an en-
gineer.
Fail there—ye've time to weld your shaft—ay, eat it,
ere ye're spoke;
Or make Kerguelen under sail—three jiggers burned wi'
smoke!
An' home again, the Rio run: it's no child's play to go
Steamin' to bell for fourteen days o' snow an' floe an'
blow—
The bergs like kelpies overside that girn an' turn an'
shift
Whaur, grindin' like the Mills o' God, goes by the big
South drift.
(Hail, snow an' ice that praise the Lord: I've met them
at their work,
An' wished we had anither route or they anither kirk.)
Yon's strain, hard strain, o' head an' hand, for though
Thy Power brings
All skill to naught, Ye'll understand a man must think
o' things.

Then, at the last, we'll get to port an' hoist their baggage clear—
The passengers, wi' gloves an' canes—an' this is what I'll hear:
'Well, thank ye for a pleasant voyage. The tender's comin' now.'
While I go testin' follower-bolts an' watch the skipper bow.
They've words for every one but me—shake hands wi' half the crew,
Except the dour Scots engineer, the man they never knew.
An' yet I like the wark for all we've dam' few pickin's here—
No pension, an' the most we earn's four hunder pound a year.
Better myself abroad? Maybe. I'd sooner starve than sail
Wi' such as call a snifter-rod 'ross' . . . French for nightingale.
Commeession on my stores? Some do; but I can not afford
To lie like stewards wi' patty-pans—. I'm older than the Board.
A bonus on the coal I save? Ou ay, the Scots are close,
But when I grudge the strength Ye gave I'll grudge their food to those.
There's bricks that I might recommend—an' clink the fire-bars cruel.
No! Welsh—Wangarti at the worst—an' damn all patent fuel!
Inventions? Ye must stay in port to mak' a patent pay.
My Deefferential Valve-Gear taught me how that business lay,

I blame no chaps wi' clearer head for aught they make
or sell.
I found that I could not invent an' look to these—as well.
So, wrestled wi' Apollyon—Nah!—fretted like a bairn—
But burned the workin'-plans last run wi' all I hoped to
earn.
Ye know how hard an Idol dies, an' what that meant to
me—
E'en tak' it for a sacrifice acceptable to Thee. . . .
Below there! Oiler! What's your wark? Ye find it
runnin' hard?
Ye needn't swill the cap wi' oil—this isn't the Cunard!
Ye thought? Ye are not paid to think. Go, sweat
that off again!
Tck! Tck! It's deefficult to sweer nor tak' The Name
in vain!
Men, ay an' women, call me stern. Wi' these to oversee
Ye'll note I've little time to burn on social repartee.
The bairns see what their elders miss; they'll hunt me to
an' fro,
Till for the sake of—well, a kiss—I tak' 'em down below.
That minds me of our Viscount loon—Sir Kenneth's
kin—the chap
Wi' Russia leather tennis-shoon an' spar-decked yacht-
in'-cap.
I showed him round last week, o'er all—an' at the last
says he:
'Mister M'Andrew, don't you think steam spoils ro-
mance at sea?'
Damned ijjit! I'd been doon that morn to see what
ailed the throws,
Manholin', on my back—the cranks three inches off
my nose.

Romance! Those first-class passengers they like it very
well,
Printed an' bound in little books; but why don't poets
tell?
I'm sick of all their quirks an' turns—the loves an'
doves they dream—
Lord, send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the Song o'
Steam!
To match wi' Scotia's noblest speech yon orchestra sub-
lime
Whaurto—uplifted like the Just—the tail-rods mark
the time.
The crank-throws give the double-bass, the feed-pump
sobs an' heaves,
An' now the main eccentrics start their quarrel on the
sheaves:
Her time, her own appointed time, the rocking link-head
bides,
Till—hear that note?—the rod's return whings glim-
merin' through the guides.
They're all awa'! True beat, full power, the clangin'
chorus goes
Clear to the tunnel where they sit, my purrin' dynamoes.
Interdependence absolute, foreseen, ordained, decreed,
To work, Ye'll note, at any tilt an' every rate o' speed.
Fra' skylight-lift to furnace-bars, backed, bolted, braced
an' stayed,
An' singin' like the Mornin' Stars for joy that they are
made;
While, out o' touch o' vanity, the sweatin' thrust-block
says:
'Not unto us the praise, or man—not unto us the
praise!'

Now, a' together, hear them lift their lesson—theirs an' mine:
'Law, Orrder, Duty an' Restraint, Obedience, Discipline!'
Mill, forge an' try-pit taught them that when roarin' they arose,
An' whiles I wonder if a soul was gien them wi' the blows.
Oh for a man to weld it then, in one trip-hammer strain,
Till even first-class passengers could tell the meanin' plain!
But no one cares except mysel' that serve an' understand
My seven thousand horse-power here. Eh, Lord! They're grand—they're grand!
Uplift am I? When first in store the new-made beasties stood,
Were Ye cast down that breathed the Word declarin' all things good?
Not so! O' that warld-liftin' joy no after-fall could vex,
Ye've left a glimmer still to cheer the Man—the Arrtifex!
That holds, in spite o' knock and scale, o' friction, waste an' slip,
An' by that light—now, mark my word—we'll build the Perfect Ship.
I'll never last to judge her lines or take her curve—not I.
But I ha' lived an' I ha' worked. 'Be thanks to Thee, Most High!
An' I ha' done what I ha' done—judge Thou if ill or well—
Always Thy Grace preventin' me. . . .
Losh! Yon's the 'Stand by' bell.

Pilot so soon? His flare it is. The mornin'-watch is set.
Well, God be thanked, as I was sayin', I'm no Pelagian yet.
Now I'll tak' on. . . .
'Mórrn, Ferguson. Man, have ye ever thought
What your good leddy costs in coal? . . . I'll burn 'em down to port.

THE MIRACLES

(1894)

I SENT a message to my dear—
A thousand leagues and more to Her—
The dumb sea-levels thrilled to hear,
And Lost Atlantis bore to Her.

Behind my message hard I came,
And nigh had found a grave for me;
But that I launched of steel and flame
Did war against the wave for me.

Uprose the deep, by gale on gale,
To bid me change my mind again—
He broke his teeth along my rail,
And, roaring, swung behind again.

I stayed the sun at noon to tell
My way across the waste of it;
I read the storm before it fell
And made the better haste of it.

Afar, I hailed the land at night—
The towers I built had heard of me—
And, ere my rocket reached its height,
Had flashed my Love the word of me.

Earth sold her chosen men of strength
(They lived and strove and died for me)
To drive my road a nation's length
And toss the miles aside for me.

I snatched their toil to serve my needs—
Too slow their fleetest flew for me—
I tired twenty smoking steeds,
And bade them bait a new for me.

I sent the lightnings forth to see
Where hour by hour She waited me.
Among ten million one was She,
And surely all men hated me!

Dawn ran to meet me at my goal—
Ah, day no tongue shall tell again!
And little folk of little soul
Rose up to buy and sell again!

THE NATIVE-BORN

(1894)

WE'VE drunk to the Queen—God bless her!—
We've drunk to our mothers' land;
We've drunk to our English brother
(But he does not understand);
We've drunk to the wide creation,
And the Cross swings low for the morn,
Last toast, and of obligation,
A health to the Native-born!

They change their skies above them,
But not their hearts that roam!
We learned from our wistful mothers
To call old England 'home';
We read of the English skylark,
Of the spring in the English lanes,
But we screamed with the painted lories
As we rode on the dusty plains!

They passed with their old-world legends—
Their tales of wrong and dearth—
Our fathers held by purchase,
But we by the right of birth;

Our heart's where they rocked our cradle,
  Our love where we spent our toil,
And our faith and our hope and our honour
  We pledge to our native soil!

I charge you charge your glasses—
  I charge you drink with me
To the men of the Four New Nations,
  And the Islands of the Sea—
To the last least lump of coral
  That none may stand outside,
And our own good pride shall teach us
  To praise our comrade's pride!

To the hush of the breathless morning
  On the thin, tin, crackling roofs,
To the haze of the burned back-ranges
  And the dust of the shoeless hoofs—
To the risk of a death by drowning,
  To the risk of a death by drouth—
To the men of a million acres,
  To the Sons of the Golden South!

To the Sons of the Golden South (Stand up!),
  And the life we live and know,
Let a fellow sing o' the little things he cares about,
  If a fellow fights for the little things he cares about
With the weight of a single blow!

To the smoke of a hundred coasters,
  To the sheep on a thousand hills,
To the sun that never blisters,
  To the rain that never chills—

To the land of the waiting springtime,
  To our five-meal, meat-fed men,
To the tall, deep-bosomed women,
  And the children nine and ten!

And the children nine and ten (Stand up!),
  And the life we live and know
Let a fellow sing o' the little things he cares about,
If a fellow fights for the little things he cares about
  With the weight of a two-fold blow!

To the far-flung fenceless prairie
  Where the quick cloud-shadows trail,
To our neighbour's barn in the offing
  And the line of the new-cut rail;
To the plough in her league-long furrow
  With the gray Lake gulls behind—
To the weight of a half-year's winter
  And the warm wet western wind!

To the home of the floods and thunder,
  To her pale dry healing blue—
To the lift of the great Cape combers,
  And the smell of the baked Karroo.
To the growl of the sluicing stamp-head—
  To the reef and the water-gold,
To the last and the largest Empire,
  To the map that is half unrolled!

To our dear dark foster-mothers,
  To the heathen songs they sung—
To the heathen speech we babbled
  Ere we came to the white man's tongue.

To the cool of our deep verandas—
  To the blaze of our jewelled main,
To the night, to the palms in the moonlight,
  And the fire-fly in the cane!

To the hearth of our people's people—
  To her well-ploughed windy sea,
To the hush of our dread high-altar
  Where The Abbey makes us We;
To the grist of the slow-ground ages,
  To the gain that is yours and mine—
To the Bank of the Open Credit,
  To the Power-house of the Line!

We've drunk to the Queen—God bless her!—
  We've drunk to our mothers' land;
We've drunk to our English brother
  (And we hope he'll understand).
We've drunk as much as we're able,
  And the Cross swings low for the morn;
Last toast—and your foot on the table!—
  A health to the Native-born!

A health to the Native-born (Stand up!),
  We're six white men arow,
All bound to sing o' the little things we care about,
All bound to fight for the little things we care about
  With the weight of a six-fold blow!
By the might of our cable-tow (Take hands!),
  From the Orkneys to the Horn,
All round the world (and a little loop to pull it by),
All round the world (and a little strap to buckle it),
  A health to the Native-born!

THE KING

(1894)

'FAREWELL, Romance!' the Cave-men said;
'With bone well carved he went away,
Flint arms the ignoble arrowhead,
And jasper tips the spear to-day.
Changed are the Gods of Hunt and Dance,
And he with these. Farewell, Romance!'

'Farewell, Romance!' the Lake-folk sighed;
'We lift the weight of flatling years;
The caverns of the mountain-side
Hold him who scorns our hutted piers.
Lost hills whereby we dare not dwell,
Guard ye his rest. Romance, Farewell!'

'Farewell, Romance!' the Soldier spoke;
'By sleight of sword we may not win,
But scuffle 'mid uncleanly smoke
Of arquebus and culverin.
Honour is lost, and none may tell
Who paid good blows. Romance, farewell!'

'Farewell, Romance!' the Traders cried;
'Our keels ha' lain with every sea;
The dull-returning wind and tide

Heave up the wharf where we would be;
The known and noted breezes swell
Our trudging sail. Romance, farewell!'

'Good-bye, Romance!' the Skipper said;
'He vanished with the coal we burn;
Our dial marks full steam ahead,
Our speed is timed to half a turn.
Sure as the ferried barge we ply
'Twixt port and port. Romance, good-bye!'

'Romance!' the season-tickets mourn,
'He never ran to catch his train,
But passed with coach and guard and horn—
And left the local—late again!'
Confound Romance! . . . And all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen.

His hand was on the lever laid,
His oil-can soothed the worrying cranks,
His whistle waked the snowbound grade,
His fog-horn cut the reeking Banks;
By dock and deep and mine and mill
The Boy-god reckless laboured still!

Robed, crowned and throned, he wove his spell,
Where heart-blood beat or hearth-smoke curled,
With unconsidered miracle,
Hedged in a backward-gazing world;
Then taught his chosen bard to say:
'Our King was with us—yesterday!'

THE RHYME OF THE THREE SEALERS

(1893)

AWAY by the lands of the Japanee
Where the paper lanterns glow
And the crews of all the shipping drink
In the house of Blood Street Joe,
At twilight, when the landward breeze
Brings up the harbour noise.
And ebb of Yokohama Bay
Swigs chattering through the buoys,
In Cisco's Dewdrop Dining Rooms
They tell the tale anew
Of a hidden sea and a hidden fight,
When the 'Baltic' ran from the 'Northern Light'
And the 'Stralsund' fought the two.

Now this is the Law of the Muscovite, that he proves with shot and steel,
When ye come by his isles in the Smoky Sea ye must not take the seal,
Where the gray sea goes nakedly between the weed-hung shelves,
And the little blue fox he is bred for his skin and the seal they breed for themselves;
For when the matkas seek the shore to drop their pups aland,

The great man-seal haul out of the sea, aroaring, band
by band;
And when the first September gales have slaked their
rutting-wrath,
The great man-seal haul back to the sea and no man
knows their path.
Then dark they lie and stark they lie—rookery, dune,
and floe,
And the Northern Lights come down o' nights to dance
with the houseless snow;
And God Who clears the grounding berg and steers the
grinding floe,
He hears the cry of the little kit-fox and the wind along
the snow.
But since our women must walk gay and money buys
their gear,
The sealing-boats they filch that way at hazard year by
year.
English they be and Japanee that hang on the Brown
Bear's flank,
And some be Scot, but the worst of the lot, and the
boldest thieves, be Yank!

It was the sealer 'Northern Light,' to the Smoky Seas
she bore.
With a stovepipe stuck from a starboard port and the
Russian flag at her fore.
('Baltic,' 'Stralsund,' and 'Northern Light'—oh! they
were birds of a feather—
Slipping away to the Smoky Seas, three seal-thieves
together!)
And at last she came to a sandy cove and the 'Baltic'
lay therein,

But her men were up with the herding seal to drive and club and skin.
There were fifteen hundred skins abeach, cool pelt and proper fur,
When the 'Northern Light' drove into the bight and the sea-mist drove with her.
The 'Baltic' called her men and weighed—she could not choose but run—
For a stovepipe seen through the closing mist, it shows like a four-inch gun
(And loss it is that is sad as death to lose both trip and ship
And lie for a rotting contraband on Vladivostock slip).
She turned and dived in the sea-smother as a rabbit dives in the whins,
And the 'Northern Light' sent up her boats to steal the stolen skins.
They had not brought a load to side or slid their hatches clear,
When they were aware of a sloop-of-war, ghost white and very near.
Her flag she showed, and her guns she showed—three of them, black, abeam,
And a funnel white with the crusted salt, but never a show of steam.

There was no time to man the brakes, they knocked the shackle free,
And the 'Northern Light' stood out again, goose-winged to open sea.
(For life it is that is worse than death, by force of Russian law
To work in the mines of mercury that loose the teeth in your jaw.)

They had not run a mile from shore—they heard no shots behind—
When the skipper smote his hand on his thigh and threw her up in the wind:
'Bluffed—raised out on a bluff,' said he, 'for if my name's Tom Hall,
You must set a thief to catch a thief—and a thief has caught us all!
By every butt in Oregon and every spar in Maine,
The hand that spilled the wind from her sail was the hand of Reuben Paine!
He has rigged and trigged her with paint and spar, and, faith, he has faked her well—
But I'd know the "Stralsund's" deckhouse yet from here to the booms o' Hell.
Oh, once we ha' met at Baltimore, and twice on Boston pier,
But the sickest day for you, Reuben Paine, was the day that you came here—
The day that you came here, my lad, to scare us from our seal
With your funnel made o' your painted cloth, and your guns o' rotten deal!
Ring and blow for the "Baltic" now, and head her back to the bay,
And we'll come into the game again—with a double deck to play!'

They rang and blew the sealers' call—the poaching cry of the sea—
And they raised the 'Baltic' out of the mist, and an angry ship was she:

And blind they groped through the whirling white and
blind to the bay again,
Till they heard the creak of the 'Stralsund's' boom and
the clank of her mooring chain.
They laid them down by bitt and boat, their pistols in
their belts,
And: 'Will you fight for it, Reuben Paine, or will you
share the pelts?'

A dog-toothed laugh laughed Reuben Paine, and bared
his flenching-knife.
'Yea, skin for skin, and all that he hath a man will give
for his life;'
But I've six thousand skins below, and Yeddo Port to see,
And there's never a law of God or man runs north of
Fifty-Three:
So go in peace to the naked seas with empty holds to
fill,
And I'll be good to your seal this catch, as many as I
shall kill!'

Answered the snap of a closing lock and the jar of a
gun-butt slid,
But the tender fog shut fold on fold to hide the wrong
they did.
The weeping fog rolled fold on fold the wrath of man to
cloak,
And the flame-spurts pale ran down the rail as the seal-
ing-rifles spoke.
The bullets bit on bend and butt, the splinter slivered
free
(Little they trust to sparrow-dust that stop the seal in
his sea!),

The thick smoke hung and would not shift, leaden it lay and blue,
But three were down on the 'Baltic's' deck and two of the 'Stralsund's' crew.
An arm's length out and overside the banked fog held them bound,
But, as they heard or groan or word, they fired at the sound.
For one cried out on the Name of God, and one to have him cease,
And the questing volley found them both and bade them hold their peace;
And one called out on a heathen joss and one on the Virgin's Name,
And the schooling bullet leaped across and showed them whence they came.
And in the waiting silences the rudder whined beneath,
And each man drew his watchful breath slow taken 'tween the teeth—
Trigger and ear and eye acock, knit brow and hard-drawn lips—
Bracing his feet by chock and cleat for the rolling of the ships.
Till they heard the cough of a wounded man that fought in the fog for breath,
Till they heard the torment of Reuben Paine that wailed upon his death:

'The tides they'll go through Fundy Race but I'll go never more
And see the hogs from ebb-tide mark turn scampering back to shore.

No more I'll see the trawlers drift below the Bass Rock ground,
Or watch the tall Fall steamer lights tear blazing up the Sound.
Sorrow is me, in a lonely sea and a sinful fight I fall,
But if there's law o' God or man you'll swing for it yet, Tom Hall!'

Tom Hall stood up by the quarter-rail. 'Your words in your teeth,' said he.
'There's never a law of God or man runs north of Fifty-Three.
So go in grace with Him to face, and an ill-spent life behind,
And I'll be good to your widows, Rube, as many as I shall find.'
A 'Stralsund' man shot blind and large, and a warlock Finn was he,
And he hit Tom Hall with a bursting ball a hand's-breadth over the knee.
Tom Hall caught hold by the topping-lift, and sat him down with an oath,
'You'll wait a little, Rube,' he said, 'the Devil has called for both.
The Devil is driving both this tide, and the killing-grounds are close,
And we'll go up to the Wrath of God as the holluschickie goes.
O men, put back your guns again and lay your rifles by,
We've fought our fight, and the best are down. Let up and let us die!

Quit firing, by the bow there—quit! Call off the "Baltic's" crew!
You're sure of Hell as me or Rube—but wait till we get through.'
There went no word between the ships, but thick and quick and loud
The life-blood drummed on the dripping decks, with the fog-dew from the shroud,
The sea-pull drew them side by side, gunnel to gunnel laid,
And they felt the sheerstrakes pound and clear, but never a word was said.

Then Reuben Paine cried out again before his spirit passed:
'Have I followed the sea for thirty years to die in the dark at last?
Curse on her work that has nipped me here with a shifty trick unkind—
I have gotten my death where I got my bread, but I dare not face it blind.
Curse on the fog! Is there never a wind of all the winds I knew
To clear the smother from off my chest, and let me look at the blue?'
The good fog heard—like a splitten sail, to left and right she tore,
And they saw the sun-dogs in the haze and the seal upon the shore.
Silver and gray ran spit and bay to meet the steel-backed tide,
And pinched and white in the clearing light the crews stared overside.

O rainbow-gay the red pools lay that swilled and spilled and spread,
And gold, raw gold, the spent shell rolled between the careless dead—
The dead that rocked so drunkenwise to weather and to lee,
And they saw the work their hands had done as God had bade them see.

And a little breeze blew over the rail that made the head-sails lift,
But no man stood by wheel or sheet, and they let the schooners drift.
And the rattle rose in Reuben's throat and he cast his soul with a cry,
And 'Gone already?' Tom Hall he said. 'Then it's time for me to die.'
His eyes were heavy with great sleep and yearning for the land,
And he spoke as a man that talks in dreams, his wound beneath his hand.
'Oh, there comes no good o' the westering wind that backs against the sun;
Wash down the decks—they're all too red—and share the skins and run,
"Baltic," "Stralsund," and "Northern Light"—clean share and share for all,
You'll find the fleets off Tolstoi Mees, but you will not find Tom Hall.
Evil he did in shoal-water and blacker sin on the deep,
But now he's sick of watch and trick and now he'll turn and sleep.

He'll have no more of the crawling sea that made him
suffer so,
But he'll lie down on the killing-grounds where the
holluschickie go.
And west you'll sail and south again, beyond the sea-
fog's rim,
And tell the Yoshiwara girls to burn a stick for him.
And you'll not weight him by the heels and dump him
overside,
But carry him up to the sand-hollows to die as Bering
died,
And make a place for Reuben Paine that knows the
fight was fair,
And leave the two that did the wrong to talk it over
there!'

Half-steam ahead by guess and lead, for the sun is
mostly veiled—
Through fog to fog, by luck and log, sail ye as Bering
sailed;
And if the light shall lift aright to give your landfall
plain,
North and by west, from Zapne Crest, ye raise the
Crosses Twain.
Fair marks are they to the inner bay, the reckless
poacher knows
What time the scarred sea-catchie lead their sleek serag-
lios.
Ever they hear the floe-pack clear, and the blast of the
old bull-whale,
And the deep seal-roar that beats off-shore above the
loudest gale.

Ever they wait the winter's hate as the thundering
boorga calls,
Where northward look they to St. George, and west-
ward to St. Paul's.
Ever they greet the hunted fleet—lone keels off head-
lands drear—
When the sealing-schooners flit that way at hazard year
by year.
Ever in Yokohama port men tell the tale anew
Of a hidden sea and a hidden fight,
When the 'Baltic' ran from the 'Northern Light'
And the 'Stralsund' fought the two.

THE DERELICT

(1894)

'And reports the derelict "Margaret Pollock" still at sea.' Shipping News.

I WAS the staunchest of our fleet
Till the sea rose beneath our feet
Unheralded, in hatred past all measure.
Into his pits he stamped my crew,
Buffeted, blinded, bound and threw,
Bidding me eyeless wait upon his pleasure.

Man made me, and my will
Is to my maker still,
Whom now the currents con, the rollers steer—
Lifting forlorn to spy
Trailed smoke along the sky,
Falling afraid lest any keel come near!

Wrenched as the lips of thirst,
Wried, dried, and split and burst,
Bone-bleached my decks, wind-scoured to the graining;
And jarred at every roll
The gear that was my soul
Answers the anguish of my beams' complaining.

For life that crammed me full,
Gangs of the prying gull
That shriek and scrabble on the riven hatches!
For roar that dumbed the gale,
My hawse-pipes' guttering wail,
Sobbing my heart out through the uncounted watches!

Blind in the hot blue ring
Through all my points I swing—
Swing and return to shift the sun anew.
Blind in my well-known sky
I hear the stars go by,
Mocking the prow that cannot hold one true!

White on my wasted path
Wave after wave in wrath
Frets 'gainst his fellow, warring where to send me.
Flung forward, heaved aside,
Witless and dazed I bide
The mercy of the comber that shall end me.

North where the bergs careen,
The spray of seas unseen
Smokes round my head and freezes in the falling;
South where the corals breed,
The footless, floating weed
Folds me and fouls me, strake on strake upcrawling.

I that was clean to run
My race against the sun—
Strength on the deep, am bawd to all disaster—
Whipped forth by night to meet
My sister's careless feet,
And with a kiss betray her to my master!

Man made me, and my will
Is to my maker still—
To him and his, our peoples at their pier:
Lifting in hope to spy
Trailed smoke along the sky,
Falling afraid lest any keel come near!

THE ANSWER

(1892)

A ROSE, in tatters on the garden path,
Cried out to God and murmured 'gainst His Wrath,
Because a sudden wind at twilight's hush
Had snapped her stem alone of all the bush.
And God, Who hears both sun-dried dust and sun,
Had pity, whispering to that luckless one.
'Sister, in that thou sayest We did not well—
What voices heardst thou when thy petals fell?'
And the Rose answered, 'In that evil hour
A voice said, "Father, wherefore falls the flower?
For lo, the very gossamers are still."
And a voice answered, "Son, by Allah's will!"'

Then softly as a rain-mist on the sward,
Came to the Rose the Answer of the Lord:
'Sister, before We smote the dark in twain,
Ere yet the stars saw one another plain,
Time, Tide, and Space, We bound unto the task
That thou shouldst fall, and such an one should ask.'
Whereat the withered flower, all content,
Died as they die whose days are innocent;
While he who questioned why the flower fell
Caught hold of God and saved his soul from Hell.

THE SONG OF THE BANJO

(1894)

YOU couldn't pack a Broadwood half a mile—
You mustn't leave a fiddle in the damp—
You couldn't raft an organ up the Nile,
And play it in an Equatorial swamp.
I travel with the cooking-pots and pails—
I'm sandwiched 'tween the coffee and the pork—
And when the dusty column checks and tails,
You should hear me spur the rearguard to a walk!

With my 'Pilly-willy-winky-winky popp!'
[Oh, it's any tune that comes into my head!]
So I keep 'em moving forward till they drop;
So I play 'em up to water and to bed.

In the silence of the camp before the fight,
When it's good to make your will and say your prayer,
You can hear my 'strumpty-tumpty' overnight
Explaining ten to one was always fair.
I'm the Prophet of the Utterly Absurd,
Of the Patently Impossible and Vain—
And when the Thing that Couldn't has occurred,
Give me time to change my leg and go again.

With my 'Tumpa-tumpa-tumpa-tum-pa tump!'
In the desert where the dung-fed camp-smoke curled
There was never voice before us till I led our lonely chorus,
I—the war-drum of the White Man round the world!

By the bitter road the Younger Son must tread,
Ere he win to hearth and saddle of his own,—
'Mid the riot of the shearers at the shed,
In the silence of the herder's hut alone—
In the twilight, on a bucket upside down,
Hear me babble what the weakest won't confess—
I am Memory and Torment—I am Town!
I am all that ever went with evening dress!

With my 'Tunk-a tunka-tunka-tunka-tunk!'
[So the lights—the London Lights—grow near and plain!]
So I rowel 'em afresh towards the Devil and the Flesh,
Till I bring my broken rankers home again.

In desire of many marvels over sea,
Where the new-raised tropic city sweats and roars,
I have sailed with Young Ulysses from the quay
Till the anchor rumbled down on stranger shores.
He is blooded to the open and the sky,
He is taken in a snare that shall not fail,
He shall hear me singing strongly, till he die,
Like the shouting of a backstay in a gale.

With my 'Hya! Heeya! Heeya! Hullah! Haul!'
[O the green that thunders aft along the deck!]
Are you sick o' towns and men? You must sign and sail again,
For it's 'Johnny Bowlegs, pack your kit and trek!'

Through the gorge that gives the stars at noonday clear—
Up the pass that packs the scud beneath our wheel—
Round the bluff that sinks her thousand fathom sheer—
Down the valley with our guttering brakes asqueal:
Where the trestle groans and quivers in the snow,
Where the many-shedded levels loop and twine,
So I lead my reckless children from below
Till we sing the Song of Roland to the pine.

With my 'Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!'
[And the axe has cleared the mountain, croup and crest!]
So we ride the iron stallions down to drink,
Through the canyons to the waters of the West!

And the tunes that mean so much to you alone—
Common tunes that make you choke and blow your nose,
Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the groan—
I can rip your very heartstrings out with those;
With the feasting, and the folly, and the fun—
And the lying, and the lusting, and the drink,
And the merry play that drops you, when you're done,
To the thoughts that burn like irons if you think.

With my 'Plunka-lunka-lunka-lunka-lunk!'
Here's a trifle on account of pleasure past,

Ere the wit that made you win gives you eyes to see your sin
And the heavier repentance at the last!

Let the organ moan her sorrow to the roof—
I have told the naked stars the Grief of Man!
Let the trumpets snare the foeman to the proof—
I have known Defeat, and mocked it as we ran!
My bray ye may not alter nor mistake
When I stand to jeer the fatted Soul of Things,
But the Song of Lost Endeavour that I make,
Is it hidden in the twanging of the strings?

With my 'Ta-ra-rara-rara-ra-ra-rrrp!'
[Is it naught to you that hear and pass me by?]
But the word—the word is mine, when the order moves the line
And the lean, locked ranks go roaring down to die.

The grandam of my grandam was the Lyre—
[O the blue below the little fisher-huts!]
That the Stealer stooping beachward filled with fire,
Till she bore my iron head and ringing guts!
By the wisdom of the centuries I speak—
To the tune of yestermorn I set the truth—
I, the joy of life unquestioned—I, the Greek—
I, the everlasting Wonder Song of Youth!

With my 'Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!'
[What d'ye lack, my noble masters? What d'ye lack?]
So I draw the world together link by link:
Yea, from Delos up to Limerick and back!

THE LINER SHE'S A LADY

(1894)

THE Liner she's a lady, an' she never looks nor 'eeds—
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, an' 'e gives 'er all she needs;
But, oh, the little cargo-boats, that sail the wet seas roun',
They're just the same as you an' me a-plyin' up an' down!

Plyin' up an' down, Jenny, 'angin' round the Yard,
All the way by Fratton tram down to Portsmouth 'Ard;
Anythin' for business, an' we're growin' old—
Plyin' up an' down, Jenny, waitin' in the cold!

The Liner she's a lady by the paint upon 'er face,
An' if she meets an accident they count it sore disgrace:
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, and 'e's always 'andy by,
But, oh, the little cargo-boats! they've got to load or die.

The Liner she's a lady, and 'er route is cut an' dried;
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, an' 'e always keeps beside;

But, oh, the little cargo-boats that 'aven't any man,
They've got to do their business first, and make the most they can!

The Liner she's a lady, and if a war should come,
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, and 'e'd bid 'er stay at home;
But, oh, the little cargo-boats that fill with every tide!
'E'd 'ave to up an' fight for them, for they are England's pride.

The Liner she's a lady, but if she wasn't made,
There still would be the cargo-boats for 'ome an' foreign trade.
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, but if we wasn't 'ere,
'E wouldn't have to fight at all for 'ome an' friends so dear.

'Ome an' friends so dear, Jenny, 'angin' round the Yard,
All the way by Fratton tram down to Portsmouth 'Ard;
Anythin' for business, an' we're growin' old—
'Ome an' friends so dear, Jenny, waitin' in the cold!

MULHOLLAND'S CONTRACT

(1894)

THE fear was on the cattle, for the gale was on the sea,
An' the pens broke up on the lower deck an' let the creatures free—
An' the lights went out on the lower deck, an' no one near but me.

I had been singin' to them to keep 'em quiet there,
For the lower deck is the dangerousest, requirin' constant care,
An' give to me as the strongest man, though used to drink and swear.

I see my chance was certain of bein' horned or trod,
For the lower deck was packed with steers thicker'n peas in a pod,
An' more pens broke at every roll—so I made a Contract with God.

An' by the terms of the Contract, as I have read the same,
If He got me to port alive I would exalt His Name,
An' praise His Holy Majesty till further orders came.

He saved me from the cattle an' He saved me from the sea,
For they found me 'tween two drownded ones where the roll had landed me—
An' a four-inch crack on top of my head, as crazy as could be.

But that were done by a stanchion, an' not by a bullock at all,
An' I lay still for seven weeks convalescing of the fall,
An' readin' the shiny Scripture texts in the Seaman's Hospital.

An' I spoke to God of our Contract, an' He says to my prayer:
'I never puts on My ministers no more than they can bear.
So back you go to the cattle-boats an' preach My Gospel there.

'For human life is chancy at any kind of trade,
But most of all, as well you know, when the steers are mad-afraid;
So you go back to the cattle-boats an' preach 'em as I've said.

'They must quit drinkin' an' swearin', they mustn't knife on a blow,
They must quit gamblin' their wages, and you must preach it so;
For now those boats are more like Hell than anything else I know.'

I didn't want to do it, for I knew what I should get,
An' I wanted to preach Religion, handsome an' out of the wet,
But the Word of the Lord were lain on me, an' I done what I was set.

I have been smit an' bruised, as warned would be the case,
An' turned my cheek to the smiter exactly as Scripture says;
But following that, I knocked him down, an' led him up to Grace.

An' we have preaching on Sundays whenever the sea is calm,
An' I use no knife or pistol an' I never take no harm,
For the Lord abideth back of me to guide my fighting arm.

An' I sign for four-pound-ten a month and save the money clear,
An' I am in charge of the lower deck, an' I never lose a steer;
An' I believe in Almighty God an' preach His Gospel here.

The skippers say I'm crazy, but I can prove 'em wrong,
For I am in charge of the lower deck with all that doth belong—
Which they would not give to a lunatic, and the competition so strong!

ANCHOR SONG

(1893)

(From 'Many Inventions')

HEH! Walk her round. Heave, ah heave her short again!
Over, snatch her over, there, and hold her on the pawl.
Loose all sail, and brace your yards back and full—
Ready jib to pay her off and heave short all!

Well, ah fare you well; we can stay no more with you, my love—
Down, set down your liquor and your girl from off your knee;
For the wind has come to say:
'You must take me while you may,
If you'd go to Mother Carey
(Walk her down to Mother Carey!),
Oh, we're bound to Mother Carey where she feeds her chicks at sea!'

Heh! Walk her round. Break, ah break it out o' that!
Break our starboard-bower out, apeak, awash, aclear.
Port—port she casts, with the harbour-mud beneath her foot,
And that's the last o' bottom we shall see this year!

Well, ah fare you well, for we've got to take her out again—
Take her out in ballast, riding light and cargo-free.
And it's time to clear and quit
When the hawser grips the bitt,
So we'll pay you with the foresheet and a promise from the sea!

Heh! Tally on. Aft and walk away with her!
Handsome to the cathead, now; O tally on the fall!
Stop, seize and fish, and easy on the davit-guy.
Up, well up the fluke of her, and inboard haul!

Well, ah fare you well, for the Channel wind's took hold of us,
Choking down our voices as we snatch the gaskets free.
And it's blowing up for night,
And she's dropping light on light,
And she's snorting and she's snatching for a breath of open sea.

Wheel, full and by; but she'll smell her road alone tonight.
Sick she is and harbour-sick—O sick to clear the land!
Roll down to Brest with the old Red Ensign over us—
Carry on and thrash her out with all she'll stand!

Well, ah fare you well, and it's Ushant gives the door to us,
Whirling like a windmill on the dirty scud to lee:

ANCHOR SONG

Till the last, last flicker goes
From the tumbling water-rows,
And we're off to Mother Carey
(Walk her down to Mother Carey!),
Oh, we're bound for Mother Carey where she feeds her chicks at sea!

THE LOST LEGION

(1895)

THERE'S a Legion that never was 'listed,
That carries no colours or crest,
But, split in a thousand detachments,
Is breaking the road for the rest.
Our fathers they left us their blessing—
They taught us, and groomed us, and crammed;
But we've shaken the Clubs and the Messes
To go and find out and be damned
(Dear boys!),
To go and get shot and be damned.

So some of us chivy the slaver,
And some of us cherish the black,
And some of us hunt on the Oil Coast,
And some on—the Wallaby track:
And some of us drift to Sarawak,
And some of us drift up The Fly,
And some share our tucker with tigers,
And some with the gentle Masai
(Dear boys!),
Take tea with the giddy Masai.

We've painted The Islands vermilion,
We've pearled on half-shares in the Bay,
We've shouted on seven-ounce nuggets,
We've starved on a Seedeeboy's pay;

We've laughed at the world as we found it,—
  Its women and cities and men—
From Sayyid Burgash in a tantrum
  To the smoke-reddened eyes of Loben
                (Dear boys!),
  We've a little account with Loben.

The ends o' the Earth were our portion,
  The ocean at large was our share.
There was never a skirmish to windward
  But the Leaderless Legion was there:
Yes, somehow and somewhere and always
  We were first when the trouble began,
From a lottery-row in Manila,
  To an I. D. B. race on the Pan
                (Dear boys!),
  With the Mounted Police on the Pan.

We preach in advance of the Army,
  We skirmish ahead of the Church,
With never a gunboat to help us
  When we're scuppered and left in the lurch.
But we know as the cartridges finish,
  And we're filed on our last little shelves,
That the Legion that never was 'listed
  Will send us as good as ourselves
                (Good men!),
  Five hundred as good as ourselves.

Then a health (we must drink it in whispers),
  To our wholly unauthorised horde—
To the line of our dusty foreloopers,
  The Gentlemen Rovers abroad—

Yes, a health to ourselves ere we scatter,
For the steamer won't wait for the train,
And the Legion that never was 'listed
Goes back into quarters again!
'Regards!
Goes back under canvas again.
Hurrah!
The swag and the billy again.
Here's how!
The trail and the packhorse again.
Salue!
The trek and the lager again.

THE SEA-WIFE

(1893)

THERE dwells a wife by the Northern Gate,
And a wealthy wife is she;
She breeds a breed o' rovin' men
And casts them over sea.

And some are drowned in deep water,
And some in sight o' shore,
And word goes back to the weary wife
And ever she sends more.

For since that wife had gate or gear,
Or hearth or garth or bield,
She willed her sons to the white harvest,
And that is a bitter yield.

She wills her sons to the wet ploughing,
To ride the horse of tree,
And syne her sons come back again
Far-spent from out the sea.

The good wife's sons come home again
With little into their hands,
But the lore of men that ha' dealt with men
In the new and naked lands;

But the faith of men that ha' brothered men
  By more than easy breath,
And the eyes o' men that ha' read wi' men
  In the open books of death.

Rich are they, rich in wonders seen,
  But poor in the goods o' men;
So what they ha' got by the skin o' their teeth
  They sell for their teeth again.

For whether they lose to the naked life
  Or win to their hearts' desire,
They tell it all to the weary wife
  That nods beside the fire.

Her hearth is wide to every wind
  That makes the white ash spin;
And tide and tide and 'tween the tides
  Her sons go out and in;

(Out with great mirth that do desire
  Hazard of trackless ways,
In with content to wait their watch.
  And warm before the blaze);

And some return by failing light,
  And some in waking dream,
For she hears the heels of the dripping ghosts
  That ride the rough roof-beam.

Home, they come home from all the ports,
  The living and the dead;
The good wife's sons come home again
  For her blessing on their head!

HYMN BEFORE ACTION

(1896)

THE earth is full of anger,
The seas are dark with wrath,
The Nations in their harness
Go up against our path:
Ere yet we loose the legions—
Ere yet we draw the blade,
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, aid!

High lust and froward bearing,
Proud heart, rebellious brow—
Deaf ear and soul uncaring,
We seek Thy mercy now!
The sinner that forswore Thee,
The fool that passed Thee by,
Our times are known before Thee—
Lord, grant us strength to die!

For those who kneel beside us
At altars not Thine own,
Who lack the lights that guide us,
Lord, let their faith atone.

If wrong we did to call them,
By honour bound they came;
Let not Thy Wrath befall them,
But deal to us the blame.

From panic, pride, and terror,
Revenge that knows no rein,
Light haste and lawless error,
Protect us yet again.
Cloak Thou our undeserving,
Make firm the shuddering breath,
In silence and unswerving
To taste Thy lesser death!

Ah, Mary pierced with sorrow,
Remember, reach and save
The soul that comes to-morrow
Before the God that gave!
Since each was born of woman,
For each at utter need—
True comrade and true foeman—
Madonna, intercede!

E'en now their vanguard gathers,
E'en now we face the fray—
As Thou didst help our fathers,
Help Thou our host to-day!
Fulfilled of signs and wonders,
In life, in death made clear—
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, hear!

TO THE TRUE ROMANCE

(1893)

(From 'Many Inventions')

THY face is far from this our war,
Our call and counter-cry,
I shall not find Thee quick and kind,
Nor know Thee till I die,
Enough for me in dreams to see
And touch Thy garments' hem:
Thy feet have trod so near to God
I may not follow them.

Through wantonness if men profess
They weary of Thy parts,
E'en let them die at blasphemy
And perish with their arts;
But we that love, but we that prove
Thine excellence august,
While we adore discover more
Thee perfect, wise, and just.

Since spoken word Man's Spirit stirred
Beyond his belly-need,
What is is Thine of fair design
In thought and craft and deed;

Each stroke aright of toil and fight,
  That was and that shall be,
And hope too high, wherefore we die,
  Has birth and worth in Thee.

Who holds by Thee hath Heaven in fee
  To gild his dross thereby,
And knowledge sure that he endure
  A child until he die—
For to make plain that man's disdain
  Is but new Beauty's birth—
For to possess in cheerfulness
  The joy of all the earth.

As Thou didst teach all lovers speech
  And Life her mystery,
So shalt Thou rule by every school
  Till love and longing die,
Who wast or yet the Lights were set,
  A whisper in the Void,
Who shalt be sung through planets young
  When this is clean destroyed.

Beyond the bounds our staring rounds,
  Across the pressing dark,
The children wise of outer skies
  Look hitherward and mark
A light that shifts, a glare that drifts,
  Rekindling thus and thus,
Not all forlorn, for Thou hast borne
  Strange tales to them of us.

TO THE TRUE ROMANCE

Time hath no tide but must abide
The servant of Thy will;
Tide hath no time, for to Thy rhyme
The ranging stars stand still—
Regent of spheres that lock our fears
Our hopes invisible,
Oh 'twas certes at Thy decrees
We fashioned Heaven and Hell!

Pure Wisdom hath no certain path
That lacks thy morning-eyne,
And captains bold by Thee controlled
Most like to Gods design;
Thou art the Voice to kingly boys
To lift them through the fight,
And Comfortress of Unsuccess,
To give the dead good-night—

A veil to draw 'twixt God His Law
And Man's infirmity,
A shadow kind to dumb and blind
The shambles where we die;
A rule to trick th' arithmetic
Too base of leaguing odds—
The spur of trust, the curb of lust,
Thou handmaid of the Gods!

O Charity, all patiently
Abiding wrack and scaith!
O Faith, that meets ten thousand cheats
Yet drops no jot of faith!

Devil and brute Thou dost transmute
To higher, lordlier show,
Who art in sooth that utter Truth
The careless angels know!

Thy face is far from this our war,
Our call and counter-cry,
I may not find Thee quick and kind,
Nor know Thee till I die.

Yet may I look with heart unshook
On blow brought home or missed—
Yet may I hear with equal ear
The clarions down the List;
Yet set my lance above mischance
And ride the barriere—
Oh, hit or miss, how little 'tis,
My Lady is not there!

THE FLOWERS

(1895)

'To our private taste, there is always something a little exotic, almost artificial, in songs which, under an English aspect and dress, are yet so manifestly the product of other skies. They affect us like translations; the very fauna and flora are alien, remote; the dog's-tooth violet is but an ill substitute for the rathe primrose, nor can we ever believe that the wood-robin sings as sweetly in April as the English thrush.'

The Athenæum.

BUY my English posies!
Kent and Surrey may—
Violets of the Undercliff
Wet with Channel spray;
Cowslips from a Devon combe—
Midland furze afire—
Buy my English posies
And I'll sell your heart's desire!

Buy my English posies!
You that scorn the May,
Won't you greet a friend from home
Half the world away?
Green against the draggled drift,
Faint and frail and first—

Buy my Northern blood-root
And I'll know where you were nursed:
Robin down the logging-road whistles, 'Come to me!'
Spring has found the maple-grove, the sap is running free;
All the winds of Canada call the ploughing-rain.
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
Here's to match your need—
Buy a tuft of royal heath,
Buy a bunch of weed
White as sand of Muysenberg
Spun before the gale—
Buy my heath and lilies
And I'll tell you whence you hail!
Under hot Constantia broad the vineyards lie—
Throned and thorned the aching berg props the speckless sky—
Slow below the Wynberg firs trails the tilted wain—
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
You that will not turn—
Buy my hot-wood clematis,
Buy a frond o' fern
Gathered where the Erskine leaps
Down the road to Lorne—
Buy my Christmas creeper
And I'll say where you were born!

West away from Melbourne dust holidays begin—
They that mock at Paradise woo at Cora Lynn—
Through the great South Otway gums sings the great South Main—
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
Here's your choice unsold!
Buy a blood-red myrtle-bloom,
Buy the kowhai's gold
Flung for gift on Taupo's face,
Sign that spring is come—
Buy my clinging myrtle
And I'll give you back your home!

Broom behind the windy town; pollen o' the pine—
Bell-bird in the leafy deep where the ratas twine—
Fern above the saddle-bow, flax upon the plain—
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
Ye that have your own
Buy them for a brother's sake
Overseas, alone.
Weed ye trample underfoot
Floods his heart abrim—
Bird ye never heeded,
Oh, she calls his dead to him!

Far and far our homes are set round the Seven Seas;
Woe for us if we forget, we that hold by these!
Unto each his mother-beach, bloom and bird and land—
Masters of the Seven Seas, oh, love and understand!

THE LAST RHYME OF TRUE THOMAS

(1893)

THE King has called for priest and cup,
The King has taken spur and blade
To dub True Thomas a belted knight,
And all for the sake o' the songs he made.

They have sought him high, they have sought him low,
They have sought him over down and lea;
They have found him by the milk-white thorn
That guards the gates o' Faerie.

'Twas bent beneath and blue above,
Their eyes were held that they might not see
The kine that grazed beneath the knowes,
Oh, they were the Queens o' Faerie!

'Now cease your song,' the King he said,
'Oh, cease your song and get you dight
To vow your vow and watch your arms,
For I will dub you a belted knight.

'For I will give you a horse o' pride,
Wi' blazon and spur and page and squire;
Wi' keep and tail and seizin and law,
And land to hold at your desire.'

True Thomas smiled above his harp,
And turned his face to the naked sky,
Where, blown before the wastrel wind,
The thistle-down she floated by.

'I ha' vowed my vow in another place,
And bitter oath it was on me,
I ha' watched my arms the lee-long night,
Where five-score fighting men would flee.

'My lance is tipped o' the hammered flame,
My shield is beat o' the moonlight cold;
And I won my spurs in the Middle World,
A thousand fathom beneath the mould.

'And what should I make wi' a horse o' pride,
And what should I make wi' a sword so brown,
But spill the rings o' the Gentle Folk
And flyte my kin in the Fairy Town?

'And what should I make wi' blazon and belt,
Wi' keep and tail and seizin and fee,
And what should I do wi' page and squire
That am a king in my own countrie?

'For I send east and I send west,
And I send far as my will may flee,
By dawn and dusk and the drinking rain,
And syne my Sendings return to me.

'They come wi' news of the groanin' earth,
They come wi' news o' the roarin' sea,
Wi' word of Spirit and Ghost and Flesh,
And man, that's mazed among the three.'

The King he bit his nether lip,
And smote his hand upon his knee:
'By the faith o' my soul, True Thomas,' he said,
'Ye waste no wit in courtesie!

'As I desire, unto my pride,
Can I make Earls by three and three,
To run before and ride behind
And serve the sons o' my body.'

'And what care I for your row-foot earls,
Or all the sons o' your body?
Before they win to the Pride o' Name,
I trow they all ask leave o' me.

'For I make Honour wi' muckle mouth,
As I make Shame wi' mincin' feet,
To sing wi' the priests at the market-cross,
Or run wi' the dogs in the naked street.

'And some they give me the good red gold,
And some they give me the white money,
And some they give me a clout o' meal,
For they be people o' low degree.

'And the song I sing for the counted gold
The same I sing for the white money,
But best I sing for the clout o' meal
That simple people given me.'

The King cast down a silver groat,
A silver groat o' Scots money,
'If I come wi' a poor man's dole,' he said,
'True Thomas, will ye harp to me?'

'Whenas I harp to the children small,
They press me close on either hand.
And who are you,' True Thomas said,
'That you should ride while they must stand?

'Light down, light down from your horse o' pride,
I trow ye talk too loud and hie,
And I will make you a triple word,
And syne, if ye dare, ye shall 'noble me.'

He has lighted down from his horse o' pride,
And set his back against the stone.
'Now guard you well,' True Thomas said,
'Ere I rax your heart from your breast-bone!'

True Thomas played upon his harp,
The fairy harp that couldna lee,
And the first least word the proud King heard,
It harpit the salt tear out o' his e'e.

'Oh, I see the love that I lost long syne,
I touch the hope that I may not see,
And all that I did o' hidden shame,
Like little snakes they hiss at me.

'The sun is lost at noon—at noon!
The dread o' doom has grippit me.
True Thomas, hide me under your cloak,
God wot, I'm little fit to dee!'

'Twas bent beneath and blue above—
'Twas open field and running flood—
Where, hot on heath and dyke and wall,
The high sun warmed the adder's brood.

'Lie down, lie down,' True Thomas said.
'The God shall judge when all is done.
But I will bring you a better word
And lift the cloud that I laid on.'

True Thomas played upon his harp,
That birled and brattled to his hand,
And the next least word True Thomas made,
It garred the King take horse and brand.

'Oh, I hear the tread o' the fighting-men,
I see the sun on splent and spear.
I mark the arrow outen the fern
That flies so low and sings so clear!

'Advance my standards to that war,
And bid my good knights prick and ride;
The gled shall watch as fierce a fight
As e'er was fought on the Border side!'

'Twas bent beneath and blue above,
'Twas nodding grass and naked sky,
Where, ringing up the wastrel wind,
The eyass stooped upon the pye.

True Thomas sighed above his harp,
And turned the song on the midmost string;
And the last least word True Thomas made,
He harpit his dead youth back to the King.

'Now I am prince, and I do well
To love my love withouten fear;
To walk wi' man in fellowship,
And breathe my horse behind the deer.

'My hounds they bay unto the death,
The buck has couched beyond the burn,
My love she waits at her window
To wash my hands when I return.

'For that I live am I content
(Oh! I have seen my true love's eyes)
To stand wi' Adam in Eden-glade,
And run in the woods o' Paradise!'

'Twas naked sky and nodding grass,
'Twas running flood and wastrel wind,
Where, checked against the open pass,
The red deer turned to wait the hind.

True Thomas laid his harp away,
And louted low at the saddle-side;
He has taken stirrup and hauden rein,
And set the King on his horse o' pride.

'Sleep ye or wake,' True Thomas said,
'That sit so still, that muse so long;
Sleep ye or wake?—till the latter sleep
I trow ye'll not forget my song.

'I ha' harpit a shadow out o' the sun
To stand before your face and cry;
I ha' armed the earth beneath your heel,
And over your head I ha' dusked the sky.

'I ha' harpit ye up to the throne o' God,
I ha' harpit your midmost soul in three;
I ha' harpit ye down to the Hinges o' Hell,
And—ye—would—make—a Knight o' me!'

IN THE NEOLITHIC AGE

(1895)

IN the Neolithic Age savage warfare did I wage
For food and fame and woolly horses' pelt;
I was singer to my clan in that dim, red Dawn of Man,
And I sang of all we fought and feared and felt.

Yea, I sang as now I sing, when the Prehistoric spring
Made the piled Biscayan ice-pack split and shove;
And the troll and gnome and dwerg, and the Gods of Cliff and Berg
Were about me and beneath me and above.

But a rival, of Solutre, told the tribe my style was outre–
'Neath a tomahawk, of diorite, he fell.
And I left my views on Art, barbed and tanged, below the heart
Of a mammothistic etcher at Grenelle.

Then I stripped them, scalp from skull, and my hunting dogs fed full,
And their teeth I threaded neatly on a thong;
And I wiped my mouth and said, 'It is well that they are dead,
For I know my work is right and theirs was wrong.'

But my Totem saw the shame; from his ridgepole shrine he came,
And he told me in a vision of the night:—
'There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
And every single one of them is right!'
. . . . . .
Then the silence closed upon me till They put new clothing on me
Of whiter, weaker flesh and bone more frail;
And I stepped beneath Time's finger, once again a tribal singer
[And a minor poet certified by Tr—ll].

Still they skirmish to and fro, men my messmates on the snow,
When we headed off the aurochs turn for turn;
When the rich Allobrogenses never kept amanuenses,
And our only plots were piled in lakes at Berne.

Still a cultured Christian age sees us scuffle, squeak, and rage,
Still we pinch and slap and jabber, scratch and dirk;
Still we let our business slide—as we dropped the half-dressed hide—
To show a fellow-savage how to work.

Still the world is wondrous large,—seven seas from marge to marge,—
And it holds a vast of various kinds of man;
And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Khatmandhu,
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban.

Here's my wisdom for your use, as I learned it when the moose
And the red deer roared where Paris roars to-night:—
There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right!

THE STORY OF UNG

(1894)

ONCE, on a glittering ice-field, ages and ages ago,
Ung, a maker of pictures, fashioned an image of snow.
Fashioned the form of a tribesman—gaily he whistled and sung,
Working the snow with his fingers. Read ye the Story of Ung!

Pleased was his tribe with that image—came in their hundreds to scan—
Handled it, smelt it, and grunted: 'Verily, this is a man!
Thus do we carry our lances—thus is a war-belt slung.
Lo! it is even as we are. Glory and honour to Ung!'

Later he pictured an aurochs—later he pictured a bear—
Pictured the sabre-tooth tiger dragging a man to his lair—
Pictured the mountainous mammoth, hairy, abhorrent, alone—
Out of the love that he bore them, scribing them clearly on bone.

Swift came the tribe to behold them, peering and pushing and still—
Men of the berg-battered beaches, men of the boulder-hatched hill—

Hunters and fishers and trappers, presently whispering low:
'Yea, they are like—and it may be— But how does the Picture-man know?

'Ung—hath he slept with the Aurochs—watched where the Mastodon roam?
Spoke on the ice with the Bow-head—followed the Sabre-tooth home?
Nay! These are toys of his fancy! If he have cheated us so,
How is there truth in his image—the man that he fashioned of snow?'

Wroth was that maker of pictures—hotly he answered the call:
'Hunters and fishers and trappers, children and fools are ye all!
Look at the beasts when ye hunt them!' Swift from the tumult he broke,
Ran to the cave of his father and told him the shame that they spoke.

And the father of Ung gave answer, that was old and wise in the craft,
Maker of pictures aforetime, he leaned on his lance and laughed:
'If they could see as thou seest they would do what thou hast done,
And each man would make him a picture, and—what would become of my son?

'There would be no pelts of the reindeer, flung down at thy cave for a gift,
Nor dole of the oily timber that comes on the Baltic drift;
No store of well-drilled needles, nor ouches of amber pale;
No new-cut tongues of the bison, nor meat of the stranded whale.

'Thou hast not toiled at the fishing when the sodden trammels freeze,
Nor worked the war-boats outward through the rush of the rock-staked seas,
Yet they bring thee fish and plunder—full meal and an easy bed—
And all for the sake of thy pictures.' And Ung held down his head.

'Thou hast not stood to the Aurochs when the red snow reeks of the fight;
Men have no time at the houghing to count his curls aright.
And the heart of the hairy Mammoth, thou sayest, they do not see,
Yet they save it whole from the beaches and broil the best for thee.

'And now do they press to thy pictures, with opened mouth and eye,
And a little gift in the doorway, and the praise no gift can buy:
But—sure they have doubted thy pictures, and that is a grievous stain—
Son that can see so clearly, return them their gifts again!'

And Ung looked down at his deerskins—their broad
shell-tasselled bands—
And Ung drew downward his mitten and looked at his
naked hands;
And he gloved himself and departed, and he heard his
father, behind:
'Son that can see so clearly, rejoice that thy tribe is
blind!'

Straight on the glittering ice-field, by the caves of the
lost Dordogne,
Ung, a maker of pictures, fell to his scribing on bone
Even to mammoth editions. Gaily he whistled and
sung,
Blessing his tribe for their blindness. Heed ye the
Story of Ung!

THE THREE-DECKER

(1894)

'The three-volume novel is extinct'

FULL thirty foot she towered from waterline to rail.
It cost a watch to steer her, and a week to shorten sail;
But, spite all modern notions, I found her first and best—
The only certain packet for the Islands of the Blest.

Fair held the breeze behind us—'twas warm with lovers' prayers.
We'd stolen wills for ballast and a crew of missing heirs.
They shipped as Able Bastards till the Wicked Nurse confessed,
And they worked the old three-decker to the Islands of the Blest.

By ways no gaze could follow, a course unspoiled of cook,
Per Fancy, fleetest in man, our titled berths we took
With maids of matchless beauty and parentage unguessed,
And a Church of England parson for the Islands of the Blest.

We asked no social questions—we pumped no hidden shame—
We never talked obstetrics when the Little Stranger came:
We left the Lord in Heaven, we left the fiends in Hell.
We weren't exactly Yussufs, but—Zuleika didn't tell.

No moral doubt assailed us, so when the port we neared,
The villain had his flogging at the gangway, and we cheered.
'Twas fiddle in the forc's'le—'twas garlands on the mast,
For every one got married, and I went ashore at last.

I left 'em all in couples akissing on the decks.
I left the lovers loving and the parents signing cheques.
In endless English comfort by county-folk caressed,
I left the old three-decker at the Islands of the Blest!

That route is barred to steamers: you'll never lift again
Our purple-painted headlands or the lordly keeps of Spain.
They're just beyond your skyline, howe'er so far you cruise
In a ram-you-damn-you liner with a brace of bucking screws.

Swing round your aching search-light—'twill show no haven's peace.
Ay, blow your shrieking sirens to the deaf, gray-bearded seas!
Boom out the dripping oil-bags to skin the deep's unrest—
And you aren't one knot the nearer to the Islands of the Blest!

But when you're threshing, crippled, with broken bridge and rail,
At a drogue of dead convictions to hold you head to gale,
Calm as the Flying Dutchman, from truck to taffrail dressed,
You'll see the old three-decker for the Islands of the Blest.

You'll see her tiering canvas in sheeted silver spread;
You'll hear the long-drawn thunder 'neath her leaping figure-head;
While far, so far above you, her tall poop-lanterns shine
Unvexed by wind or weather like the candles round a shrine!

Hull down—hull down and under—she dwindles to a speck,
With noise of pleasant music and dancing on her deck.
All's well—all's well aboard her—she's left you far behind,
With a scent of old-world roses through the fog that ties you blind.

Her crew are babes or madmen? Her port is all to make?
You're manned by Truth and Science, and you steam for steaming's sake?
Well, tinker up your engines—you know your business best—
She's taking tired people to the Islands of the Blest!

AN AMERICAN

(1894)

The American Spirit speaks:

'IF the Led Striker call it a strike,
Or the papers call it a war,
They know not much what I am like,
Nor what he is, my Avatar.'

Through many roads, by me possessed,
He shambles forth in cosmic guise;
He is the Jester and the Jest,
And he the Text himself applies.

The Celt is in his heart and hand,
The Gaul is in his brain and nerve;
Where, cosmopolitanly planned,
He guards the Redskin's dry reserve.

His easy unswept hearth he lends
From Labrador to Guadeloupe;
Till, elbowed out by sloven friends,
He camps, at sufferance, on the stoop.

Calm-eyed he scoffs at sword and crown,
Or panic-blinded stabs and slays:
Blatant he bids the world bow down,
Or cringing begs a crust of praise;

Or, sombre-drunk, at mine and mart,
  He dubs his dreary brethren Kings.
His hands are black with blood—his heart
  Leaps, as a babe's, at little things.

But, through the shift of mood and mood,
  Mine ancient humour saves him whole—
The cynic devil in his blood
  That bids him mock his hurrying soul;

That bids him flout the Law he makes,
  That bids him make the Law he flouts,
Till, dazed by many doubts, he wakes
  The drumming guns that—have no doubts;

That checks him foolish-hot and fond,
  That chuckles through his deepest ire,
That gilds the slough of his despond
  But dims the goal of his desire;

Inopportune, shrill-accented,
  The acrid Asiatic mirth
That leaves him, careless 'mid his dead,
  The scandal of the elder earth.

How shall he clear himself, how reach
  Your bar or weighed defence prefer?
A brother hedged with alien speech
  And lacking all interpreter.

Which knowledge vexes him a space;
  But while Reproof around him rings,
He turns a keen untroubled face
  Home, to the instant need of things.

Enslaved, illogical, elate,
  He greets th' embarrassed Gods, nor fears
To shake the iron hand of Fate
  Or match with Destiny for beers.

Lo, imperturbable he rules,
  Unkempt, disreputable, vast—
And, in the teeth of all the schools,
  I—I shall save him at the last!

THE MARY GLOSTER

(1894)

I'VE paid for your sickest fancies; I've humoured your crackedest whim—
Dick, it's your daddy, dying; you've got to listen to him!
Good for a fortnight, am I? The doctor told you? He lied.
I shall go under by morning, and— Put that nurse outside.
'Never seen death yet, Dickie? Well, now is your time to learn,
And you'll wish you held my record before it comes to your turn.
Not counting the Line and the Foundry, the yards and the village, too,
I've made myself and a million; but I'm damned if I made you.
Master at two-and-twenty, and married at twenty-three—
Ten thousand men on the pay-roll, and forty freighters at sea!
Fifty years between 'em, and every year of it fight,
And now I'm Sir Anthony Gloster, dying, a baronite:
For I lunched with his Royal 'Ighness—what was it the papers a-had?
'Not least of our merchant-princes.' Dickie, that's me, your dad!

I didn't begin with askings. I took my job and I stuck;
And I took the chances they wouldn't, an' now they're calling it luck.
Lord, what boats I've handled—rotten and leaky and old!
Ran 'em, or—opened the bilge-cock, precisely as I was told.
Grub that 'ud bind you crazy, and crews that 'ud turn you gray,
And a big fat lump of insurance to cover the risk on the way.
The others they dursn't do it; they said they valued their life
(They've served me since as skippers). I went, and I took my wife.
Over the world I drove 'em, married at twenty-three,
And your mother saving the money and making a man of me,
I was content to be master, but she said there was better behind;
She took the chances I wouldn't, and I followed your mother blind.
She egged me to borrow the money, an' she helped me to clear the loan,
When we bought half shares in a cheap 'un and hoisted a flag of our own.
Patching and coaling on credit, and living the Lord knew how,
We started the Red Ox freighters—we've eight-and-thirty now.
And those were the days of clippers, and the freights were clipper-freights,
And we knew we were making our fortune, but she died in Macassar Straits—

By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union Bank—
And we dropped her in fourteen fathom; I pricked it off where she sank.
Owners we were, full owners, and the boat was christened for her,
And she died in the Mary Gloster. My heart, how young we were!
So I went on a spree round Java and well-nigh ran her ashore,
But your mother came and warned me and I wouldn't liquor no more:
Strict I stuck to my business, afraid to stop or I'd think,
Saving the money (she warned me), and letting the other men drink.
And I met M'Cullough in London (I'd turned five 'undred then),
And 'tween us we started the Foundry—three forges and twenty men:
Cheap repairs for the cheap 'uns. It paid, and the business grew,
For I bought me a steam-lathe patent, and that was a gold mine too.
'Cheaper to build 'em than buy 'em,' I said, but M'Cullough he shied,
And he wasted a year in talking before we moved to the Clyde.
And the Lines were all beginning, and we all of us started fair,
Building our engines like houses and staying the boilers square.
But M'Cullough 'e wanted cabins with marble and maple and all,

And Brussels an' Utrecht velvet, and baths and a Social Hall,
And pipes for closets all over, and cutting the frames too light,
But M'Cullough he died in the Sixties, and— Well, I'm dying to-night. . . .
I knew—I knew what was coming, when we bid on the 'Byfleet's' keel—
They piddled and piffled with iron: I'd given my orders for steel!
Steel and the first expansions. It paid, I tell you, it paid,
When we came with our nine-knot freighters and collared the long-run trade!
And they asked me how I did it, and I gave 'em the Scripture text,
'You keep your light so shining a little in front o' the next!'
They copied all they could follow, but they couldn't copy my mind,
And I left 'em sweating and stealing a year and a half behind.
Then came the armour-contracts, but that was M'Cullough's side;
He was always best in the Foundry, but better, perhaps, he died.
I went through his private papers; the notes was plainer than print;
And I'm no fool to finish if a man'll give me a hint.
(I remember his widow was angry.) So I saw what the drawings meant,
And I started the six-inch rollers, and it paid me sixty per cent—

Sixty per cent with failures, and more than twice we could do,
And a quarter-million to credit, and I saved it all for you!
I thought—it doesn't matter—you seemed to favour your ma,
But you're nearer forty than thirty, and I know the kind you are.
Harrer an' Trinity College! I ought to ha' sent you to sea—
But I stood you an education, an' what have you done for me?
The things I knew was proper you wouldn't thank me to give,
And the things I knew was rotten you said was the way to live.
For you muddled with books and pictures, an' china an' etchin's an' fans,
And your rooms at college was beastly—more like a whore's than a man's—
Till you married that thin-flanked woman, as white and as stale as a bone,
An' she gave you your social nonsense; but where's that kid o' your own?
I've seen your carriages blocking the half o' the Cromwell Road,
But never the doctor's brougham to help the missus unload.
(So there isn't even a grandchild, an' the Gloster family's done.)
Not like your mother, she isn't. She carried her freight each run.
But they died, the pore little beggars! At sea she had 'em—they died.

Only you, an' you stood it; you haven't stood much beside.
Weak, a liar, and idle, and mean as a collier's whelp
Nosing for scraps in the galley. No help—my son was no help!
So he gets three 'undred thousand, in trust and the interest paid.
I wouldn't give it you, Dickie—you see, I made it in trade.
You're saved from soiling your fingers, and if you have no child,
It all comes back to the business. Gad, won't your wife be wild!
'Calls and calls in her carriage, her 'andkerchief up to 'er eye:
'Daddy! dear daddy's dyin'!' and doing her best to cry.
Grateful? Oh, yes, I'm grateful, but keep her away from here.
Your mother 'ud never ha' stood 'er, and, anyhow, women are queer. . . .
There's women will say I've married a second time. Not quite!
But give pore Aggie a hundred, and tell her your lawyers'll fight.
She was the best o' the boiling—you'll meet her before it ends;
I'm in for a row with the mother—I'll leave you settle my friends:
For a man he must go with a woman, which women don't understand—
Or the sort that say they can see it they aren't the marrying brand.

But I wanted to speak o' your mother that's Lady Gloster still—
I'm going to up and see her, without it's hurting the will.
Here! Take your hand off the bell-pull. Five thousand's waiting for you,
If you'll only listen a minute, and do as I bid you do.
They'll try to prove me crazy, and, if you bungle, they can;
And I've only you to trust to! (O God, why ain't he a man?)
There's some waste money on marbles, the same as M'Cullough tried—
Marbles and mausoleums—but I call that sinful pride.
There's some ship bodies for burial—we've carried 'em, soldered and packed;
Down in their wills they wrote it, and nobody called them cracked.
But me—I've too much money, and people might . . . All my fault:
It come o' hoping for grandsons and buying that Wokin' vault.
I'm sick o' the 'ole dam' business; I'm going back where I came.
Dick, you're the son o' my body, and you'll take charge o' the same!
I want to lie by your mother, ten thousand mile away,
And they'll want to send me to Woking; and that's where you'll earn your pay.
I've thought it out on the quiet, the same as it ought to be done—
Quiet, and decent, and proper—an' here's your orders, my son.

You know the Line? You don't, though. You write to the Board, and tell
Your father's death has upset you an' you're goin' to cruise for a spell,
An' you'd like the Mary Gloster—I've held her ready for this—
They'll put her in working order and you'll take her out as she is.
Yes, it was money idle when I patched her and put her aside.
(Thank God, I can pay for my fancies!)—the boat where your mother died,
By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union Bank,
We dropped her—I think I told you—and I pricked it off where she sank—
['Tiny she looked on the grating—that oily, treacly sea—]
'Hundred and eighteen East, remember, and South just three.
Easy bearings to carry—three South—three to the dot;
But I gave M'Andrew a copy in case of dying—or not.
And so you'll write to M'Andrew, he's Chief of the Maori Line;
They'll give him leave, if you ask 'em and say it's business o' mine.
I built three boats for the Maoris, an' very well pleased they were,
An' I've known Mac since the Fifties, and Mac knew me—and her.
After the first stroke warned me I sent him the money to keep
Against the time you'd claim it, committin' your dad to the deep;

For you are the son o' my body, and Mac was my oldest friend,
I've never asked 'im to dinner, but he'll see it out to the end.
Stiff-necked Glasgow beggar, I've heard he's prayed for my soul,
But he couldn't lie if you paid him, and he'd starve before he stole!
He'll take the Mary in ballast—you'll find her a lively ship;
And you'll take Sir Anthony Gloster, that goes on 'is wedding-trip,
Lashed in our old deck-cabin with all three port-holes wide,
The kick o' the screw beneath him and the round blue seas outside!
Sir Anthony Gloster's carriage—our 'ouse-flag flyin' free—
Ten thousand men on the pay-roll and forty freighters at sea!
He made himself and a million, but this world is a fleetin' show,
And he'll go to the wife of 'is bosom the same as he ought to go—
By the heel of the Paternosters—there isn't a chance to mistake—
And Mac'll pay you the money as soon as the bubbles break!
Five thousand for six weeks' cruising, the stanchest freighter afloat,
And Mac he'll give you your bonus the minute I'm out o' the boat!
He'll take you round to Macassar, and you'll come back alone;
He knows what I want o' the Mary. . . . I'll do what I please with my own.

Your mother 'ud call it wasteful, but I've seven-and-thirty more;
I'll come in my private carriage and bid it wait at the door. . . .
For my son 'e was never a credit: 'e muddled with books and art,
And 'e lived on Sir Anthony's money and 'e broke Sir Anthony's heart.
There isn't even a grandchild, and the Gloster family's done—
The only one you left me, O mother, the only one!
Harrer and Trinity College—me slavin' early an' late—
An' he thinks I'm dying crazy, and you're in Macassar Strait!
Flesh o' my flesh, my dearie, for ever an' ever amen,
That first stroke come for a warning; I ought to ha' gone to you then.
But—cheap repairs for a cheap 'un—the doctors said I'd do:
Mary, why didn't you warn me? I've allus heeded to you,
Excep'—I know—about women; but you are a spirit now;
An', wife, they was only women, and I was a man. That's how.
An' a man 'e must go with a woman, as you could not understand;
But I never talked 'em secrets. I paid 'em out o' hand.
Thank Gawd, I can pay for my fancies! Now what's five thousand to me,
For a berth off the Paternosters in the haven where I would be?
I believe in the Resurrection, if I read my Bible plain,
But I wouldn't trust 'em at Wokin'; we're safer at sea again.

For the heart it shall go with the treasure—go down to the sea in ships.
I'm sick of the hired women—I'll kiss my girl on her lips!
I'll be content with my fountain, I'll drink from my own well,
And the wife of my youth shall charm me—an' the rest can go to Hell!
(Dickie, he will, that's certain.) I'll lie in our standin'-bed,
An' Mac 'll take her in ballast—an' she trims best by the head. . . .
Down by the head an' sinkin', her fires are drawn and cold,
And the water's splashin' hollow on the skin of the empty hold—
Churning an' choking and chuckling, quiet and scummy and dark—
Full to her lower hatches and risin' steady. Hark!
That was the after-bulkhead. . . . She's flooded from stem to stern. . . .
Never seen death yet, Dickie? . . . Well, now is your time to learn!

SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL

(1896)

SPEAKIN' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all,
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found them good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,
An' go observin' matters till they die.

What do it matter where or 'ow we die,
So long as we've our 'ealth to watch it all—
The different ways that different things are done,
An' men an' women lovin' in this world—
Takin' our chances as they come along,
An' when they ain't, pretendin' they are good?

In cash or credit—no, it aren't no good;
You 'ave to 'ave the 'abit or you'd die,
Unless you lived your life but one day long,
Nor didn't prophesy nor fret at all,
But drew your tucker some'ow from the world,
An' never bothered what you might ha' done.

But, Gawd, what things are they I 'aven't done?
I've turned my 'and to most, an' turned it good,
In various situations round the world—

SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL

For 'im that doth not work must surely die;
But that's no reason man should labour all
'Is life on one same shift; life's none so long.

Therefore, from job to job I've moved along.
Pay couldn't 'old me when my time was done,
For something in my 'ead upset me all,
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 'twas for good,
An', out at sea, be'eld the dock-lights die,
An' met my mate—the wind that tramps the world!

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,
Which you can read and care for just so long,
But presently you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,
An' turn another—likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

Gawd bless this world! Whatever she 'ath done—
Excep' when awful long—I've found it good.
So write, before I die, ' 'E liked it all!'

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

(1893–1896)

WHEN 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
He'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea;
An' what he thought 'e might require,
'E went an' took—the same as me!

The market-girls an' fishermen,
The shepherds an' the sailors, too,
They 'eard old songs turn up again,
But kep' it quiet—same as you!

They knew 'e stole; 'e knew they knowed.
They didn't tell, nor make a fuss,
But winked at 'Omer down the road,
An' 'e winked back—the same as us!

BOBS

THERE'S a little red-faced man,
Which is Bobs.
Rides the tallest 'orse 'e can—
Our Bobs.
If it bucks or kicks or rears,
'E can sit for twenty years,
With a smile round both 'is ears—
Can't yer, Bobs?

Then 'ere's to Bobs Bahadur—
Little Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!
'E's our pukka Kandahader—
Fightin' Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!
'E's the Dook of Aggy Chel;[1]
'E's the man that done us well,
An' we'll follow 'im to 'ell—
Won't we, Bobs?

If a limber's slipped a trace,
'Ook on Bobs.
If a marker's lost 'is place,
Dress by Bobs.
For 'e's eyes all up 'is coat,
An' a bugle in 'is throat,
An' you will not play the goat
Under Bobs.

[1]Get ahead.

'E's a little down on drink,
Chaplain Bobs.
But it keeps us outer Clink—
Don't it, Bobs?
So we will not complain
Tho' 'e's water on the brain,
If 'e leads us straight again—
Blue-light Bobs.

If you stood 'im on 'is 'ead,
Father Bobs,
You could spill a quart o' lead
Outer Bobs.
'E's been at it thirty years,
An'—amassin' souveneers
In the way o' slugs an' spears—
Ain't yer, Bobs?

What 'e does not know o' war,
Gen'ral Bobs,
You can arst the shop next door—
Can't they, Bobs?
Oh, 'e's little, but 'e's wise;
'E's a terror for 'is size,
An'—'e—does—not—advertise—
Do yer, Bobs?

Now they've made a bloomin' Lord
Outer Bobs,
Which was but 'is fair reward—
Weren't it, Bobs?

An' 'e'll wear a coronet
Where 'is 'elmet used to set;
But we know you won't forget—
Will yer, Bobs?

Then 'ere's to Bobs Bahadur—
Little Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!
Pocket-Wellington an' arder—[1]
Fightin' Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!
This ain't no bloomin' ode,
But you've 'elped the soldier's load,
An' for benefits bestowed,
Bless yer, Bobs!

[1]And a half.

'BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN'

I'M 'ere in a ticky ulster an' a broken billycock 'at,
A-layin' on to the sergeant I don't know a gun from a bat;
My shirt's doin' duty for jacket, my sock's stickin' out o' my boots,
An' I'm learnin' the damned old goose-step along o' the new recruits!

Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
Don't look so 'ard, for I 'aven't no card,
I'm back to the Army again!

I done my six years' service. 'Er Majesty sez: 'Good day—
You'll please to come when you're rung for, an' 'ere's your 'ole back-pay;
An' fourpence a day for baccy—an' bloomin' gen'rous, too;
An' now you can make your fortune—the same as your orf'cers do.'

Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again;
'Ow did I learn to do right-about turn?
I'm back to the Army again!

'BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN'

A man o' four-an'-twenty that 'asn't learned of a trade—
Beside 'Reserve' agin' him—'e'd better be never made.
I tried my luck for a quarter, an' that was enough for me,
An' I thought of 'Er Majesty's barricks, an' I thought I'd go an' see.

Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again;
'Tisn't my fault if I dress when I 'alt—
I'm back to the Army again!

The sergeant arst no questions, but 'e winked the other eye,
'E sez to me, ' 'Shun!' an' I shunted, the same as in days gone by;
For 'e saw the set o' my shoulders, an' I couldn't 'elp 'oldin' straight
When me an' the other rookies come under the barrick gate.

Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again;
'Oo would ha' thought I could carry an' port?
I'm back to the Army again!

I took my bath, an' I wallered—for, Gawd, I needed it so!
I smelt the smell o' the barricks, I 'eard the bugles go.
I 'eard the feet on the gravel—the feet o' the men what drill—
An' I sez to my flutterin' 'eart-strings, I sez to 'em, 'Peace, be still!'

Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again;
'Oo said I knew when the Jumner was due?
I'm back to the Army again!

I carried my slops to the tailor; I sez to 'im, 'None o' your lip!
You tight 'em over the shoulders, an' loose 'em over the 'ip,
For the set o' the tunic's 'orrid. An' 'e sez to me, 'Strike me dead,
But I thought you was used to the business!' an' so 'e done what I said.

Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
Rather too free with my fancies? Wot—me?
I'm back to the Army again!

Next week I'll 'ave 'em fitted; I'll buy me a swagger-cane;
They'll let me free o' the barricks to walk on the Hoe again
In the name o' William Parsons, that used to be Edward Clay,
An'—any pore beggar that wants it can draw my four-pence a day!

Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again:
Out o' the cold an' the rain, sergeant,
Out o' the cold an' the rain.

'BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN'

'Oo's there?
A man that's too good to be lost you,
A man that is 'andled an' made—
A man that will pay what 'e cost you
In learnin' the others their trade—parade!
You're droppin' the pick o' the Army
Because you don't 'elp 'em remain,
But drives 'em to cheat to get out o' the street
An' back to the Army again!

'BIRDS OF PREY' MARCH

MARCH! The mud is cakin' good about our trousies.
Front!—eyes front, an' watch the Colour-casin's drip.
Front! The faces of the women in the 'ouses
Ain't the kind o' things to take aboard the ship.

Cheer! An' we'll never march to victory.
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar!
The Large Birds o' Prey
They will carry us away,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!

Wheel! Oh, keep your touch; we're goin' round a corner.
Time!—mark time, an' let the men be'ind us close.
Lord! the transport's full, an' 'alf our lot not on 'er—
Cheer, O cheer! We're going off where no one knows.

March! The Devil's none so black as 'e is painted!
Cheer! We'll 'ave some fun before we're put away.
'Alt, an' 'and 'er out—a woman's gone and fainted!
Cheer! Get on—Gawd 'elp the married men to-day!

Hoi! Come up, you 'ungry beggars, to yer sorrow.
('Ear them say they want their tea, an' want it quick!)
You won't have no mind for slingers, not to-morrow—
No; you'll put the 'tween-decks stove out, bein' sick!

'BIRDS OF PREY' MARCH

'Alt! The married kit 'as all to go before us!
'Course it's blocked the bloomin' gangway up again!
Cheer, O cheer the 'Orse Guards watchin' tender o'er us,
Keepin' us since eight this mornin' in the rain!

Stuck in 'eavy marchin'-order, sopped and wringin'—
Sick, before our time to watch 'er 'eave an' fall,
'Ere's your 'appy 'ome at last, an' stop your singin'.
'Alt! Fall in along the troop-deck! Silence all!

Cheer! For we'll never live to see no bloomin' victory!
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar!
(One cheer more!)
The jackal an' the kite
'Ave an 'ealthy appetite,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip! Urroar!)
The eagle an' the crow
They are waitin' ever so,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip! Urroar!)
Yes, the Large Birds o' Prey
They will carry us away,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!

'SOLDIER AN' SAILOR TOO'

AS I was spittin' into the Ditch aboard o' the 'Crocodile',
I seed a man on a man-o'-war got up in the Reg'lars' style.
'E was scrapin' the paint from off of 'er plates, an' I sez to 'im, ''Oo are you?'
Sez 'e, 'I'm a Jolly—'Er Majesty's Jolly—soldier an' sailor too!'
Now 'is work begins by Gawd knows when, and 'is work is never through;
'E isn't one o' the reg'lar Line, nor 'e isn't one of the crew.
'E's a kind of a giddy harumfrodite—soldier an' sailor too!

An' after I met 'im all over the world, a-doin' all kinds of things,
Like landin' 'isself with a Gatlin' gun to talk to them 'eathen kings;
'E sleeps in an 'ammick instead of a cot, an' 'e drills with the deck on a slew,
An' 'e sweats like a Jolly—'Er Majesty's Jolly—soldier an' sailor too!
For there isn't a job on the top o' the earth the beggar don't know, nor do—

You can leave 'im at night on a bald man's 'ead, to paddle 'is own canoe—
'E's a sort of a bloomin' cosmopolouse—soldier an' sailor too.

We've fought 'em in trooper, we've fought 'em in dock, and drunk with 'em in betweens,
When they called us the seasick scull'ry-maids, an' we called 'em the Ass Marines;
But, when we was down for a double fatigue, from Woolwich to Bernardmyo,
We sent for the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
They think for 'emselves, an' they steal for 'emselves, and they never ask what's to do,
But they're camped an' fed an' they're up an' fed before our bugle's blew.
Ho! they ain't no limpin' procrastitutes—soldier an' sailor too.

You may say we are fond of an 'arness-cut, or 'ootin' in barrick-yards,
Or startin' a Board School mutiny along o' the Onion Guards;
But once in a while we can finish in style for the ends of the earth to view,
The same as the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
They come of our lot, they was brothers to us; they was beggars we'd met an' knew;
Yes, barrin' an inch in the chest an' the arm, they was doubles o' me an' you;
For they weren't no special chrysanthemums—soldier an' sailor too!

To take your chance in the thick of a rush, with firing all about,
Is nothing so bad when you've cover to 'and, an' leave an' likin' to shout;
But to stand an' be still to the 'Birken'ead' drill is a damn tough bullet to chew,
An' they done it, the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
Their work was done when it 'adn't begun; they was younger nor me an' you;
Their choice it was plain between drownin' in 'eaps an' bein' mopped by the screw,
So they stood an' was still to the 'Birken'ead' drill, soldier an' sailor too!

We're most of us liars, we're 'arf of us thieves, an' the rest are as rank as can be,
But once in a while we can finish in style (which I 'ope it won't 'appen to me).
But it makes you think better o' you an' your friends, an' the work you may 'ave to do,
When you think o' the sinkin' 'Victorier's' Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
Now there isn't no room for to say ye don't know—they 'ave proved it plain and true—
That whether it's Widow, or whether it's ship, Victorier's work is to do,
An' they done it, the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!

SAPPERS

WHEN the Waters were dried an' the Earth did appear,
('It's all one,' says the Sapper),
The Lord He created the Engineer,
Her Majesty's Royal Engineer,
With the rank and pay of a Sapper!

When the Flood come along for an extra monsoon,
'Twas Noah constructed the first pontoon
To the plans of Her Majesty's, etc.

But after fatigue in the wet an' the sun,
Old Noah got drunk, which he wouldn't ha' done
If he'd trained with, etc.

When the Tower o' Babel had mixed up men's bat,
Some clever civilian was managing that,
An' none of, etc.

When the Jews had a fight at the foot of a hill,
Young Joshua ordered the sun to stand still,
For he was a Captain of Engineers, etc.

When the Children of Israel made bricks without straw,
They were learnin' the regular work of our Corps,
The work of, etc.

For ever since then, if a war they would wage,
Behold us a-shinin' on history's page—
First page for, etc.

We lay down their sidings an' help 'em entrain,
An' we sweep up their mess through the bloomin' campaign,
In the style of, etc.

They send us in front with a fuse an' a mine
To blow up the gates that are rushed by the Line,
But bent by, etc.

They send us behind with a pick an' a spade,
To dig for the guns of a bullock-brigade
Which has asked for, etc.

We work under escort in trousers and shirt,
An' the heathen they plug us tail-up in the dirt,
Annoying, etc.

We blast out the rock an' we shovel the mud,
We make 'em good roads an'—they roll down the khud,
Reporting, etc.

We make 'em their bridges, their wells, an' their huts,
An' the telegraph-wire the enemy cuts,
An' it's blamed on, etc.

An' when we return, an' from war we would cease,
They grudge us adornin' the billets of peace,
Which are kept for, etc.

We build 'em nice barracks—they swear they are bad,
That our Colonels are Methodist, married or mad,
Insultin', etc.

They haven't no manners nor gratitude too,
For the more that we help 'em, the less will they do,
But mock at, etc.

Now the Line's but a man with a gun in his hand,
An' Cavalry's only what horses can stand,
When helped by, etc.

Artillery moves by the leave o' the ground,
But we are the men that do something all round,
For we are, etc.

I have stated it plain, an' my argument's thus
('It's all one,' says the Sapper),
There's only one Corps which is perfect—that's us;
An' they call us Her Majesty's Engineers,
Her Majesty's Royal Engineers,
With the rank and pay of a Sapper!

THAT DAY

IT got beyond all orders an' it got beyond all 'ope;
It got to shammin' wounded an' retirin' from the 'alt.
'Ole companies was lookin' for the nearest road to slope;
It were just a bloomin' knock-out—an' our fault!

Now there ain't no chorus 'ere to give,
Nor there ain't no band to play;
An' I wish I was dead 'fore I done what I did,
Or seen what I seed that day!

We was sick o' bein' punished, an' we let 'em know it, too;
An' a company-commander up an' 'it us with a sword,
An' some one shouted "'Ook it!' an' it come to sove-ki-poo,
An' we chucked our rifles from us—O my Gawd!

There was thirty dead an' wounded on the ground we wouldn't keep—
No, there wasn't more than twenty when the front begun to go;
But, Christ! along the line o' flight they cut us up like sheep,
An' that was all we gained by doin' so.

THAT DAY

I 'eard the knives be'ind me, but I dursn't face my man,
Nor I don't know where I went to, 'cause I didn't 'alt to see,
Till I 'eard a beggar squealin' out for quarter as 'e ran,
An' I thought I knew the voice an'—it was me!

We was 'idin' under bedsteads more than 'arf a march away;
We was lyin' up like rabbits all about the countryside;
An' the major cursed 'is Maker 'cause 'e lived to see that day,
An' the colonel broke 'is sword acrost, an' cried.

We was rotten 'fore we started—we was never disciplined;
We made it out a favour if an order was obeyed;
Yes, every little drummer 'ad 'is rights an' wrongs to mind,
So we had to pay for teachin'—an' we paid!

The papers 'id it 'andsome, but you know the Army knows;
We was put to groomin' camels till the regiments withdrew,
An' they gave us each a medal for subduin' England's foes,
An' I 'ope you like my song—because it's true!

An' there ain't no chorus 'ere to give,
Nor there ain't no band to play;
But I wish I was dead 'fore I done what I did,
Or seen what I seed that day!

'THE MEN THAT FOUGHT AT MINDEN'

A Song of Instruction

THE men that fought at Minden, they was rookies in their time—
So was them that fought at Waterloo!
All the 'ole command, yuss, from Minden to Maiwand,
They was once dam' sweeps like you!

Then do not be discouraged, 'Eaven is your 'elper,
We'll learn you not to forget;
An' you mustn't swear an' curse, or you'll only catch it worse,
For we'll make you soldiers yet!

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad stocks beneath their chins,
Six inch 'igh an' more;
But fatigue it was their pride, and they would not be denied
To clean the cook-'ouse floor.

The men that fought at Minden, they had anarchistic bombs
Served to 'em by name of 'and-grenades;
But they got it in the eye (same as you will by an' by)
When they clubbed their field-parades.

'THE MEN THAT FOUGHT AT MINDEN'

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad buttons up an' down,
Two-an'-twenty dozen of 'em told;
But they didn't grouse an' shirk at an hour's extry work,
They kept 'em bright as gold.

The men that fought at Minden, they was armed with musketoons,
Also, they was drilled by 'alberdiers;
I don't know what they were, but the sergeants took good care
They washed be'ind their ears.

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad ever cash in 'and
Which they did not bank nor save,
But spent it gay an' free on their betters—such as me—
For the good advice I gave.

The men that fought at Minden, they was civil—yuss, they was—
Never didn't talk o' rights an' wrongs,
But they got it with the toe (same as you will get it—so!)—
For interrupting songs.

The men that fought at Minden, they was several other things
Which I don't remember clear;
But that's the reason why, now the six-year men are dry,
The rooks will stand the beer!

Then do not be discouraged, 'Eaven is your 'elper,
We'll learn you not to forget;
An' you mustn't swear an' curse, or you'll only catch it worse,
And we'll make you soldiers yet!

Soldiers yet, if you've got it in you—
All for the sake of the Core;
Soldiers yet, if we 'ave to skin you—
Run an' get the beer, Johnny Raw—Johnny Raw!
Ho! run an' get the beer, Johnny Raw!

CHOLERA CAMP

WE'VE got the cholerer in camp—it's worse than forty fights:
We're dyin' in the wilderness the same as Isrulites;
It's before us, an' be'ind us, an' we cannot get away,
An' the doctor's just reported we've ten more to-day!

Oh, strike your camp an' go. the bugle's callin',
The Rains are fallin'—
The dead are bushed an' stoned to keep 'em safe below;
The Band's a-doin' all she knows to cheer us;
The chaplain's gone and prayed to Gawd to 'ear us—
To 'ear us—
O Lord, for it's a-killin' of us so!

Since August, when it started, it's been stickin' to our tail,
Though they've 'ad us out by marches an' they've 'ad us back by rail;
But it runs as fast as troop-trains, and we cannot get away;
An' the sick-list to the Colonel makes ten more to-day.

There ain't no fun in women nor there ain't no bite to drink;
It's much too wet for shootin', we can only march and think;

An' at evenin', down the nullahs, we can 'ear the jackals say,
'Get up, you rotten beggars, you've ten more to-day!'

'Twould make a monkey cough to see our way o' doin' things—
Lieutenants takin' companies an' captains takin' wings,
An' Lances actin' Sergeants—eight file to obey—
For we've lots o' quick promotion on ten deaths a day!

Our Colonel's white an' twitterly—'e gets no sleep nor food,
But mucks about in 'orspital where nothing does no good.
'E sends us 'eaps o' comforts, all bought from 'is pay—
But there aren't much comfort 'andy on ten deaths a day.

Our Chaplain's got a banjo, an' a skinny mule 'e rides,
An' the stuff 'e says an' sings us, Lord, it makes us split our sides!
With 'is black coat-tails a-bobbin' to 'Ta-ra-ra Boom-der-ay!'
'E's the proper kind o' padre for ten deaths a day.

An' Father Victor 'elps 'im with our Roman Catholicks—
He knows an 'eap of Irish songs an' rummy conjurin' tricks;
An' the two they works together when it comes to play or pray;
So we keep the ball a-rollin' on ten deaths a day.

CHOLERA CAMP

We've got the cholerer in camp—we've got it 'ot an' sweet;
It ain't no Christmas dinner, but it's 'elped an' we must eat.
We've gone beyond the funkin', 'cause we've found it doesn't pay,
An' we're rockin' round the Districk on ten deaths a day!

Then strike your camp an' go, the Rains are fallin',
The Bugle's callin'!
The dead are bushed an' stoned to keep 'em safe below!
An' them that do not like it they can lump it,
An' them that cannot stand it they can jump it;
We've got to die somewhere—some way—some'ow—
We might as well begin to do it now!
Then, Number One, let down the tent-pole slow,
Knock out the pegs an' 'old the corners—so!
Fold in the flies, furl up the ropes, an' stow!
Oh, strike—oh, strike your camp an' go!
(Gawd 'elp us!)

THE LADIES

I'VE taken my fun where I've found it;
I've rogued an' I've ranged in my time;
I've 'ad my pickin' o' sweet'earts,
An' four o' the lot was prime.
One was an 'arf-caste widow,
One was a woman at Prome,
One was the wife of a jemadar-sais,[1]
An' one is a girl at 'ome.

Now I aren't no 'and with the ladies,
For, takin' 'em all along,
You never can say till you've tried 'em,
An' then you are like to be wrong.
There's times when you'll think that you mightn't,
There's times when you'll know that you might;
But the things you will learn from the Yellow an' Brown,
They'll 'elp you a lot with the White!

I was a young un at 'Oogli,
Shy as a girl to begin;
Aggie de Castrer she made me,
An' Aggie was clever as sin;

[1]Head groom.

Older than me, but my first un—
  More like a mother she were—
Showed me the way to promotion an' pay,
  An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then I was ordered to Burma,
  Actin' in charge o' Bazar,
An' I got me a tiddy live 'eathen
  Through buyin' supplies off 'er pa.
Funny an' yellow an' faithful—
  Doll in a teacup she were,
But we lived on the square, like a true-married pair,
  An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then we was shifted to Neemuch
  (Or I might ha' been keepin' 'er now),
An' I took with a shiny she-devil,
  The wife of a nigger at Mhow;
'Taught me the gipsy-folks' bolee;[1]
  Kind o' volcano she were,
For she knifed me one night 'cause I wished she was
    white,
And I learned about women from 'er!

Then I come 'ome in the trooper,
  'Long of a kid o' sixteen—
Girl from a convent at Meerut,
  The straightest I ever 'ave seen.
Love at first sight was 'er trouble,
  She didn't know what it were;
An' I wouldn't do such, 'cause I liked 'er too much,
  But—I learned about women from 'er!

[1]Slang.

I've taken my fun where I've found it,
An' now I must pay for my fun,
For the more you 'ave known o' the others
The less will you settle to one;
An' the end of it's sittin' and thinkin',
An' dreamin' Hell-fires to see;
So be warned by my lot (which I know you will not),
An' learn about women from me!

What did the Colonel's Lady think?
Nobody never knew.
Somebody asked the Sergeant's wife,
An' she told 'em true!
When you get to a man in the case,
They're like as a row of pins—
For the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins!

BILL 'AWKINS

'' AS anybody seen Bill 'Awkins?'
'Now 'ow in the devil would I know?'
''E's taken my girl out walkin',
An' I've got to tell 'im so—
Gawd—bless—'im!
I've got to tell 'im so.'

'D'yer know what 'e's like, Bill 'Awkins?'
'Now what in the devil would I care?'
''E's the livin', breathin' image of an organ-grinder's monkey,
With a pound of grease in 'is 'air—
Gawd—bless—'im!
An' a pound o' grease in 'is 'air.'

'An' s'pose you met Bill 'Awkins,
Now what in the devil 'ud ye do?'
'I'd open 'is cheek to 'is chin-strap buckle,
An' bung up 'is both eyes, too—
Gawd—bless—'im!
An' bung up 'is both eyes, too!'

'Look 'ere, where 'e comes, Bill 'Awkins!
Now what in the devil will you say?'
'It isn't fit an' proper to be fightin' on a Sunday,
So I'll pass 'im the time o' day—
Gawd—bless—'im!
I'll pass 'im the time o' day!'

THE MOTHER-LODGE

THERE was Rundle, Station Master,
An' Beazeley of the Rail,
An' 'Ackman, Commissariat,
An' Donkin' o' the Jail;
An' Blake, Conductor-Sargent,
Our Master twice was 'e,
With 'im that kept the Europe-shop,
Old Framjee Eduljee.

Outside—'Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!'
Inside—'Brother,' an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother Lodge out there!

We'd Bola Nath, Accountant,
An' Saul the Aden Jew,
An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman
Of the Survey Office too;
There was Babu Chuckerbutty,
An' Amir Singh the Sikh,
An' Castro from the fittin'-sheds,
The Roman Catholick!

We 'adn't good regalia,
An' our Lodge was old an' bare,
But we knew the Ancient Landmarks,
An' we kep' 'em to a hair;

An' lookin' on it backwards
It often strikes me thus,
There ain't such things as infidels,
Excep', per'aps, it's us.

For monthly, after Labour,
We'd all sit down and smoke
(We dursn't give no banquits,
Lest a Brother's caste were broke),
An' man on man got talkin'
Religion an' the rest,
An' every man comparin'
Of the God 'e knew the best.

So man on man got talkin',
An' not a Brother stirred
Till mornin' waked the parrots
An' that dam' brain-fever-bird;
We'd say 'twas 'ighly curious,
An' we'd all ride 'ome to bed,
With Mo'ammed, God, an' Shiva
Changin' pickets in our 'ead.

Full oft on Guv'ment service
This rovin' foot 'ath pressed,
An' bore fraternal greetin's
To the Lodges east an' west,
Accordin' as commanded
From Kohat to Singapore,
But I wish that I might see them
In my Mother Lodge once more!

I wish that I might see them,
My Brethren black an' brown,
With the trichies smellin' pleasant
An' the hog-darn[1] passin' down;
An' the old khansamah[2] snorin'
On the bottle-khana[3] floor,
Like a Master in good standing
With my Mother Lodge once more.

Outside—'Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!'
Inside—'Brother,' an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother Lodge out there!

[1]Cigar-lighter. [2]Butler. [3]Pantry.

'FOLLOW ME 'OME'

THERE was no one like 'im, 'Orse or Foot,
Nor any o' the Guns I knew;
An' because it was so, why, o' course 'e went an' died,
Which is just what the best men do.

So it's knock out your pipes an' follow me!
An' it's finish up your swipes an' follow me!
Oh, 'ark to the big drum callin',
Follow me—follow me 'ome!

'Is mare she neighs the 'ole day long,
She paws the 'ole night through,
An' she won't take 'er feed 'cause o' waitin' for 'is step,
Which is just what a beast would do.

'Is girl she goes with a bombardier
Before 'er month is through;
An' the banns are up in church, for she's got the beggar hooked,
Which is just what a girl would do.

We fought 'bout a dog—last week it were—
No more than a round or two;
But I strook 'im cruel 'ard, an' I wish I 'adn't now,
Which is just what a man can't do.

'E was all that I 'ad in the way of a friend,
An' I've 'ad to find one new;
But I'd give my pay an' stripe for to get the beggar back,
Which it's just too late to do.

So it's knock out your pipes an' follow me!
An' it's finish off your swipes an' follow me!
Oh, 'ark to the fifes a-crawlin'!
Follow me—follow me 'ome!

Take 'im away! 'E's gone where the best men go.
Take 'im away! An' the gun-wheels turnin' slow.
Take 'im away! There's more from the place 'e come.
Take 'im away, with the limber an' the drum.

For it's 'Three rounds blank' an' follow me,
An' it's 'Thirteen rank' an' follow me;
Oh, passin' the love o' women,
Follow me—follow me 'ome!

THE SERGEANT'S WEDDIN'

'E WAS warned agin 'er—
That's what made 'im look;
She was warned agin 'im—
That is why she took.
'Wouldn't 'ear no reason,
'Went an' done it blind;
We know all about 'em,
They've got all to find!

Cheer for the Sergeant's weddin'—
Give 'em one cheer more!
Gray gun-'orses in the lando,
An' a rogue is married to, etc.

What's the use o' tellin'
'Arf the lot she's been?
'E's a bloomin' robber,
An' 'e keeps canteen.
'Ow did 'e get 'is buggy?
Gawd, you needn't ask!
'Made 'is forty gallon
Out of every cask!

Watch 'im, with 'is 'air cut,
Count us filin' by—
Won't the Colonel praise 'is
Pop—u—lar—i—ty!

We 'ave scores to settle—
  Scores for more than beer;
She's the girl to pay 'em—
  That is why we're 'ere!

See the chaplain thinkin'?
  See the women smile?
Twig the married winkin'
  As they take the aisle?
Keep your side-arms quiet,
  Dressin' by the Band.
Ho! You 'oly beggars,
  Cough be'ind your 'and!

Now it's done an' over,
  'Ear the organ squeak,
''Voice that breathed o'er Eden'—
  Ain't she got the cheek!
White an' laylock ribbons,
  Think yourself so fine!
I'd pray Gawd to take yer
  'Fore I made yer mine!

Escort to the kerridge,
  Wish 'im luck, the brute!
Chuck the slippers after—
  [Pity 'taint a boot!]
Bowin' like a lady,
  Blushin' like a lad—
'Oo would say to see 'em
  Both is rotten bad?

THE SERGEANT'S WEDDIN'

Cheer for the Sergeant's weddin'—
  Give 'em one cheer more!
Gray gun-'orses in the lando,
  An' a rogue is married to, etc.

THE JACKET

THROUGH the Plagues of Egyp' we was chasin' Arabi,
Gettin' down an' shovin' in the sun;
An' you might 'ave called us dirty, an' you might ha' called us dry,
An' you might 'ave 'eard us talkin' at the gun.
But the Captain 'ad 'is jacket, an' the jacket it was new—
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!)
An' the wettin' of the jacket is the proper thing to do,
Nor we didn't keep 'im waiting very long.

One day they gave us orders for to shell a sand redoubt,
Loadin' down the axle-arms with case;
But the Captain knew 'is dooty, an' he took the crackers out
An' he put some proper liquor in its place.
An' the Captain saw the shrapnel, which is six-an'-thirty clear.
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!)
'Will you draw the weight,' sez 'e, 'or will you draw the beer?'
An' we didn't keep 'im waitin' very long.
For the Captain, etc.

Then we trotted gentle, not to break the bloomin' glass,
Though the Arabites 'ad all their ranges marked;

But we dursn't 'ardly gallop, for the most was bottled Bass,
An' we'd dreamed of it since we was disembarked:
So we fired economic with the shells we 'ad in 'and
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!),
But the beggars under cover 'ad the impidence to stand,
An' we couldn't keep 'em waitin' very long.
And the Captain, etc.

So we finished 'arf the liquor (an' the Captain took champagne),
An' the Arabites was shootin' all the while;
An' we left our wounded 'appy with the empties on the plain,
An' we used the bloomin' guns for projec-tile!
We limbered up an' galloped—there were nothin' else to do—
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!)
An' the Battery came a-boundin' like a boundin' kangaroo,
But they didn't watch us comin' very long.
As the Captain, etc.

We was goin' most extended—we was drivin' very fine,
An' the Arabites were loosin' 'igh an' wide,
Till the Captain took the glassy with a rattlin' right incline,
An' we dropped upon their 'eads the other side.
Then we give 'em quarter—such as 'adn't up and cut
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!),
An' the Captain stood a limberful of fizzy—somethin' Brutt,
But we didn't leave it fizzing very long.
For the Captain, etc.

We might ha' been court-martialled, but it all come out all right
When they signalled us to join the main command.
There was every round expended, there was every gunner tight,
An' the Captain waved a corkscrew in 'is 'and.
But the Captain 'ad 'is jacket, etc.

THE 'EATHEN

THE 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an' stone;
'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own;
'E keeps 'is side-arms awful: 'e leaves 'em all about,
An' then comes up the regiment an' pokes the 'eathen out.

All along o' dirtiness, all along o' mess,
All along o' doin' things rather-more-or-less,
All along of abby-nay,[1] kul,[2] an' hazar-ho,[3]
Mind you keep your rifle an' yourself jus' so!

The young recruit is 'aughty—'e draf's from Gawd knows where;
They bid 'im show 'is stockin's an' lay 'is mattress square;
'E calls it bloomin' nonsense—'e doesn't know no more—
An' then up comes 'is Company an' kicks 'im round the floor!

The young recruit is 'ammered—'e takes it very 'ard;
'E 'angs 'is 'ead an' mutters—'e sulks about the yard;
'E talks o' 'cruel tyrants' 'e'll swing for by-an'-by,
An' the others 'ears an' mocks 'im, an' the boy goes orf to cry.

[1]Not now. [2]To-morrow. [3]Wait a bit.

The young recruit is silly—'e thinks o' suicide;
'E's lost 'is gutter-devil; 'e 'asn't got 'is pride;
But day by day they kicks 'im, which 'elps 'im on a bit,
Till 'e finds 'isself one mornin' with a full an' proper kit.

Gettin' clear o' dirtiness, gettin' done with mess,
Gettin' shut o' doin' things rather-more-or-less;
Not so fond of abby-nay, kul, nor hazar-ho,
Learns to keep 'is rifle an' 'isself jus' so!

The young recruit is 'appy—'e throws a chest to suit;
You see 'im grow mustaches; you 'ear 'im slap 'is boot;
'E learns to drop the 'bloodies' from every word 'e slings,
An' 'e shows an 'ealthy brisket when 'e strips for bars an' rings.

The cruel-tyrant-sergeants they watch 'im 'arf a year;
They watch 'im with 'is comrades, they watch 'im with 'is beer;
They watch 'im with the women at the regimental dance,
And the cruel-tyrant-sergeants send 'is name along for 'Lance.'

An' now 'e's 'arf o' nothin', an' all a private yet,
'Is room they up an' rags 'im to see what they will get;
They rags 'im low an' cunnin', each dirty trick they can,
But 'e learns to sweat 'is temper an' 'e learns to sweat 'is man.

An', last, a Colour-Sergeant, as such to be obeyed,
'E schools 'is men at cricket, 'e tells 'em on parade;
They sees 'em quick an' 'andy, uncommon set an' smart,
An' so 'e talks to orficers which 'ave the Core at 'eart.

'E learns to do 'is watchin' without it showin' plain;
'E learns to save a dummy, an' shove 'im straight again;
'E learns to check a ranker that's buyin' leave to shirk;
An' 'e learns to make men like 'im so they'll learn to like their work.

An' when it comes to marchin' he'll see their socks are right,
An' when it comes to action 'e shows 'em 'ow to sight;
'E knows their ways of thinkin' and just what's in their mind;
'E knows when they are takin' on an' when they've fell be'ind.

'E knows each talkin' corpril that leads a squad astray;
'E feels 'is innards 'eavin', 'is bowels givin' way;
'E sees the blue-white faces all tryin' 'ard to grin,
An' 'e stands an' waits an' suffers till it's time to cap 'em in.

An' now the hugly bullets come peckin' through the dust,
An' no one wants to face 'em, but every beggar must;
So, like a man in irons which isn't glad to go,
They moves 'em off by companies uncommon stiff an' slow.

Of all 'is five years' schoolin' they don't remember much
Excep' the not retreatin', the step an' keepin' touch.
It looks like teachin' wasted when they duck an' spread an' 'op,
But if 'e 'adn't learned 'em they'd be all about the shop!

An' now it's "'Oo goes backward?' an' now it's "'Oo comes on?'
And now it's 'Get the doolies,' an' now the captain's gone;

An' now it's bloody murder, but all the while they 'ear
'Is voice, the same as barrick drill, a-shepherdin' the rear.

'E's just as sick as they are, 'is 'eart is like to split,
But 'e works 'em, works 'em, works 'em till he feels 'em take the bit;
The rest is 'oldin' steady till the watchful bugles play,
An' 'e lifts 'em, lifts 'em, lifts 'em through the charge that wins the day!

The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an' stone;
'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own;
The 'eathen in 'is blindness must end where 'e began,
But the backbone of the Army is the non-commissioned man!
Keep away from dirtiness—keep away from mess,
Don't get into doin' things rather-more-or-less!
Let's ha' done with abby-nay, kul, an' hazar-ho;
Mind you keep your rifle an' yourself jus' so!

THE SHUT-EYE SENTRY

SEZ the Junior Orderly Sergeant
To the Senior Orderly Man:
'Our Orderly Orf'cer's hokee-mut,
You 'elp 'im all you can.
For the wine was old and the night is cold,
An' the best we may go wrong,
So, 'fore 'e gits to the sentry-box,
You pass the word along.'

So it was 'Rounds! What rounds?' at two of a frosty night,
'E's 'oldin' on by the sergeant's sash, but, sentry, shut your eye.
An' it was 'Pass! All's well!' Oh, ain't 'e drippin' tight!
'E'll need an affidavit pretty badly by-an'-by.

The moon was white on the barricks,
The road was white an' wide,
An' the Orderly Orf'cer took it all,
An' the ten-foot ditch beside.
An' the corporal pulled an' the sergeant pushed,
An' the three they danced along,
But I'd shut my eyes in the sentry-box,
So I didn't see nothin' wrong.

Though it was 'Rounds! What Rounds?' O corporal,
'old 'im up!
'E's usin' 'is cap as it shouldn't be used, but, sentry,
shut your eye.
An' it was 'Pass! All's well!' Ho, shun the foamin'
cup!
'E'll need, etc.

'Twas after four in the mornin';
We 'ad to stop the fun,
An' we sent 'im 'ome on a bullock-cart,
With 'is belt an' stock undone;
But we sluiced 'im down an' we washed 'im out,
An' a first-class job we made,
When we saved 'im, smart as a bombardier,
For six o'clock parade.

It 'ad been 'Rounds! What Rounds?' Oh, shove 'im
straight again!
'E's usin' 'is sword for a bicycle, but, sentry, shut
your eye.
An' it was 'Pass! All's well!' 'E's called me 'Darlin'
Jane'!
'E'll need, etc.

The drill was long an' 'eavy,
The sky was 'ot an' blue.
An' 'is eye was wild an' 'is 'air was wet,
But 'is sergeant pulled 'im through.
Our men was good old trusties—
They'd done it on their 'ead;
But you ought to 'ave 'eard 'em markin' time
To 'ide the things 'e said!

For it was 'Right flank—wheel!' for ''Alt, an' stand at ease!'
An' 'Left extend!' for 'Centre close!' O marker, shut your eye!
An' it was, ''Ere, sir, 'ere! before the Colonel sees!'
So he needed affidavits pretty badly by-an'-by.

There was two-an'-thirty sergeants,
There was corp'rals forty-one,
There was just nine 'undred rank an' file
To swear to a touch o' sun.
There was me 'e'd kissed in the sentry-box,
As I 'ave not told in my song,
But I took my oath, which were Bible truth,
I 'adn't seen nothin' wrong.

There's them that's 'ot an' 'aughty,
There's them that's cold an' 'ard,
But there comes a night when the best gets tight,
And then turns out the Guard.
I've seen them 'ide their liquor
In every kind o' way,
But most depends on makin' friends
With Privit Thomas A.!

When it is 'Rounds! What rounds?' 'E's breathin' through 'is nose.
'E's reelin', rollin', roarin' tight, but, sentry, shut your eye.
An' it is 'Pass! All's well!' An' that's the way it goes:
We'll 'elp 'im for 'is mother, an' 'e'll 'elp us by-an'-by!

'MARY, PITY WOMEN!'

YOU call yourself a man,
For all you used to swear,
An' leave me, as you can,
My certain shame to bear?
I 'ear! You do not care—
You done the worst you know.
I 'ate you, grinnin' there. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

Nice while it lasted, an' now it is over—
Tear out your 'eart an' good-bye to your lover!
What's the use o' grievin', when the mother that bore you
(Mary, pity women!) knew it all before you?

It aren't no false alarm,
The finish to your fun;
You—you 'ave brung the 'arm,
An' I'm the ruined one;
An' now you'll off an' run
With some new fool in tow.
Your 'eart? You 'aven't none. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

When a man is tired there is naught will bind 'im;
All 'e solemn promised 'e will shove be'ind 'im.

'MARY, PITY WOMEN!'

What's the good o' prayin' for The Wrath to strike 'im
(Mary, pity women!), when the rest are like 'im?

What 'ope for me or—it?
  What's left for us to do?
I've walked with men a bit,
  But this—but this is you.
  So 'elp me Christ, it's true!
Where can I 'ide or go?
  You coward through and through! . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

All the more you give 'em the less are they for givin'—
Love lies dead, an' you cannot kiss 'im livin'.
Down the road 'e led you there is no returnin'
(Mary, pity women!), but you're late in learnin'!

You'd like to treat me fair?
  You can't, because we're pore?
We'd starve? What do I care!
  We might, but this is shore!
  I want the name—no more—
The name, an' lines to show,
  An' not to be an 'ore. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

What's the good o' pleadin', when the mother that bore
  you
(Mary, pity women!) knew it all before you?
Sleep on 'is promises an' wake to your sorrow
(Mary, pity women!), for we sail to-morrow!

FOR TO ADMIRE

THE Injian Ocean sets an' smiles
So sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue;
There aren't a wave for miles an' miles
Excep' the jiggle from the screw.
The ship is swep', the day is done,
The bugle's gone for smoke and play;
An' black ag'in' the settin' sun
The Lascar sings, 'Hum deckty hai!'[1]

For to admire an' for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide—
It never done no good to me,
But I can't drop it if I tried!

I see the sergeants pitchin' quoits,
I 'ear the women laugh an' talk,
I spy upon the quarter-deck
The orficers an' lydies walk.
I thinks about the things that was,
An' leans an' looks acrost the sea,
Till spite of all the crowded ship
There's no one lef' alive but me.

[1] 'I'm looking out.'

FOR TO ADMIRE

The things that was which I 'ave seen,
In barrick, camp, an' action too,
I tells them over by myself,
An' sometimes wonders if they're true;
For they was odd—most awful odd—
But all the same now they are o'er,
There must be 'eaps o' plenty such,
An' if I wait I'll see some more.

Oh, I 'ave come upon the books,
An' frequent broke a barrick rule,
An' stood beside an' watched myself
Be'avin' like a bloomin' fool.
I paid my price for findin' out,
Nor never grutched the price I paid,
But sat in Clink without my boots,
Admirin' 'ow the world was made.

Be'old a crowd upon the beam,
An' 'umped above the sea appears
Old Aden, like a barrick-stove
That no one's lit for years an' years!
I passed by that when I began,
An' I go 'ome the road I came,
A time-expired soldier-man
With six years' service to 'is name.

My girl she said, 'Oh, stay with me!'
My mother 'eld me to 'er breast.
They've never written none, an' so
They must 'ave gone with all the rest—

With all the rest which I 'ave seen
An' found an' known an' met along.
I cannot say the things I feel,
And so I sing my evenin' song:

For to admire an' for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide—
It never done no good to me,
But I can't drop it if I tried!

L'ENVOI

WHEN Earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are twisted and dried,
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic has died,
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it—lie down for an æon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to work anew!

And those that were good shall be happy: they shall sit in a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair;
They shall find real saints to draw from—Magdalene, Peter, and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired at all!

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are!